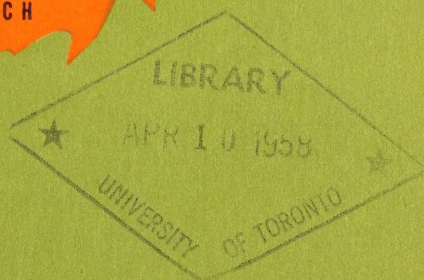


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The Arts in Canada

CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP SERIES PAMPHLET NO. 6

THE ARTS IN CANADA

prepared by

Canadian Citizenship Branch

DEPARTMENT OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Ottawa, 1957



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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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INTRODUCTION

CANADIANS are sometimes surprised to learn that they have art going back three centuries. As early as 1668 a school of arts and crafts was founded at St. Joachim near Quebec and this was a strong influence in establishing a deeply-rooted tradition of fine craftsmanship. In the two hundred years which followed skilled architects, woodcarvers, silver-smiths, and other craftsmen produced beautiful and original work which is unique on this continent.

Information on the origin and development of Canadian art is, however, not readily available. Only recently has any real research been undertaken and relatively few books have been written on the subject.

In the following pages an attempt has been made to present a brief historical survey of art in Canada. The development of our artistic tradition is traced from the late seventeenth century down to the present day. In the later periods, the greatest emphasis has been placed on painting, which is the most highly developed of our arts, but some attention has also been paid to architecture, sculpture, and the allied arts.

It is hoped that this short survey of Canadian art may prove useful in assisting the reader to gain a fuller appreciation of the achievements of Canadian artists, past and present.

CHAPTER I

FRENCH COLONIAL PERIOD

ART in New France, though not as old as Mexican colonial art, which developed under the Spaniards in the sixteenth century, is contemporary with that of New England. A strong impetus was given to the growth of art in the French colony as early as 1668, the year in which Laval, the first bishop of Quebec, established a school of arts and crafts at St. Joachim on Cap Tourmente near Quebec. Gifted sculptors and other craftsmen were brought over from France to teach at this school. Many of them settled as permanent residents in the colony, practised their calling, and handed down the traditions of their craft.

By the seventeenth century an artistic tradition was firmly planted on Canadian soil, and a remarkable growth and flowering took place during the next two hundred years. In both quality and variety, this early Canadian art equalled or surpassed contemporary artistic achievements in North America. It embraced painting, decorative arts, silver-work, architecture, and a brilliant school of wood sculpture—mostly carried out by well trained and intelligent artists who were masters of their craft.

This artistic development was not a pale copy of what was taking place in Europe. Though based on French art of the period it developed through isolation into a uniquely Canadian artistic expression, moulded by climate, the life of the people, and a genuine feeling for beauty.

Architecture

The French pioneers brought with them the style and building methods of the countryside of northern France. The style was that of the seventeenth century as it had developed in the provinces rather than in Paris and amid the brilliance of the court of Versailles. In North America the settlers adapted and modified this style to suit a harsher climate and different living conditions. In this way a type of architecture arose which, though firmly based on French traditions, was yet distinctively Canadian.

Most of the early architects were mason-contractors who undertook both the design and construction of a building. It was not until about the middle of the nineteenth century that the architect, in the modern sense of the word, appeared, and he seems to have developed from among the woodcarvers.

The material used for the first buildings in Quebec was wood, but field stone was abundant and it was not long before many houses were being built of stone. Stone was used from the beginning for large buildings. Walls were usually of field rubble, that is, stones bedded deeply in lime mortar. Cut stone was needed only for angles and for borders round windows and doors. For this purpose Quebec limestone was used. While some houses were built wholly of stone or wholly of wood, others had a wooden framework with masonry between the uprights. The stone-filled frame was a simple means of insulating a house and was widely used both in early Canada and in New England.

Early roofing materials consisted of boards and shingles but these presented a serious fire hazard. Experiments were made with tiles and slates but neither of these materials was plentiful or practicable. A later development was sheet tin which came to be very extensively used for churches and important buildings. It proved to be ideal for the Canadian climate, being light, durable, and fireproof, and turning a beautiful bronze colour with the passing of time.

Large Buildings

The earliest buildings which the French explorers built in Canada were *habitations* or permanent trading posts. They were of wooden construction and consisted of a group of buildings erected round a courtyard and fortified against Indian raids by bastions and palisades. The accounts left by Champlain of Sieur de Monts' *habitations* on St. Croix Island, built in 1604, and at Port Royal (1605), and his own *habitation* at Quebec (1608) furnish detailed descriptions of these structures which have long since disappeared, leaving only scant traces.

Most of the early religious buildings too are no longer in existence. However, two important buildings in Quebec city remain: the Hôpital-Général, parts of which were built shortly after 1671, and the Ursuline Convent of which the oldest existing parts date from 1687.

The core of the Hôpital-Général was originally a Récollet monastery. Between 1695 and 1712 the monastery was converted into the present hospital, and at later periods alterations were made and new buildings added. The old refectory of 1671 with its pine panelling was retained and is still in use. It is surely one of the oldest continually inhabited rooms in North America.

The oldest parts of the Ursuline Convent have survived from the third building: the first two were destroyed by fires in 1650 and 1686. The present structure is in the shape of a large rectangle, of which the north and west sides date from about 1687 and 1690 respectively, though the interiors have been very much altered since that time. Extensive additions were made after 1850 and the building took on its present form about 1872. The walls are of rubble stone about two feet thick and the roof of tin sheets laid diagonally.

Dwelling-Houses

One of the oldest town dwelling-houses still in existence in the province is the Château de Ramezay in Montreal which was built between 1704 and 1723. Its style is typical of many houses erected in the Montreal district up to the middle of the nineteenth century. Originally this type of house was built as one of a row of attached houses, its long side to the street and its end-gables, common to the neighbouring houses, carried up above the roof to form fire partitions. When it developed into a free-standing house like the Château de Ramezay, or others in the open countryside, it retained many of its original features including the heavy end-gables. The evolution of the row house into the detached gabled house was an interesting Canadian phenomenon paralleled only by developments in some of the Hanseatic towns in Europe.

Some of the early religious buildings and town merchants' houses were designed in a simple, dignified, and sometimes even elegant style. But it was in cottages, manor houses, and parish churches that the greatest originality and most pleasing effects were achieved.

One of the most distinctive features of Quebec architecture is the cottage which cannot be found anywhere outside the province. The typical Quebec cottage is a rectangular building with low walls of whitewashed rubble, high-pitched roof, and a large stone chimney on the ridge. Larger houses often have chimneys in the gable ends. Windows of the casement type throughout the house and dormer windows in the roof are other features. The traditional ground plan is an oblong divided into two unequal parts: the smaller part is the kitchen and the larger part the community room.

The overhanging eaves, bellcast roof and verandah were later developments. Originally the eaves were narrow but they were built further and further out to shield the walls from the hot Quebec sun. As the unsupported eaves sometimes



Villeneuve House, Charlesbourg. Photo: Museum of the Province of Quebec

stretched out as much as four feet from the wall, a large curving extension at the bottom of the roof necessarily developed. The next step was to build posts to support the overhanging eaves. The verandah thus formed was not an original feature in Quebec: the idea probably came from the south at the end of the eighteenth or beginning of the nineteenth centuries. Once introduced, however, verandahs were added to many old houses whose original design did not include them. They fitted into the Quebec climate, affording shelter

from the bright rays of the sun in summer and from the winter snows.

The manor house was built in the style of a large cottage. Excellent examples of the early farmhouse or small manor are the Ferme St. Gabriel at Point St. Charles, near Montreal, built in 1698, and the presbytery at Batiscan which probably dates from 1686. These share the honour of being among the oldest houses surviving in Quebec. Other old manor houses are the Villeneuve and Paradis houses at Charlesbourg, which have a typically French feature, the hipped pavilion roof. The Langlois Manor, built during the eighteenth century at Portneuf, has a verandah which probably formed part of the original design. Another typical building of this period is the schoolhouse at Oka which has no verandah but wide-spreading eaves and a snow platform and stair to the front door.

The "large cottage" style of architecture was used for most manor houses up to the last years of the eighteenth century. At that time English and American Classic Revival influences began to creep in. By the early nineteenth century, mansions in the Classic style were being erected throughout the province, although the Canadian house has never completely died out.

Churches

Like the Quebec house, churches in the province are rooted in the French tradition but they have also developed an original style of their own. Their slender, silvered spires may be seen for many miles in the broad, flat landscape of the river valleys.

It was not until the first part of the eighteenth century that churches were built of stone. Wood was used for the earliest ones which were usually rebuilt in stone. The church at St. Pierre on the Island of Orleans, for example, was con-



Church at Ste. Famille, Island of Orleans. Photo: Museum of the Province of Quebec

structed of wood in 1676 and replaced by a stone church in 1716. Again field stone laid in lime mortar was the common building material for the walls. Stone mouldings or carvings of any kind are a sign of later date in a parish church; only

large town churches showed any such architectural decoration.

The west fronts of early churches apparently consisted of a simple gable with round-arched door and small circular window surmounted by a wooden belfry. Above the belfry or lantern rose the wooden needle spire covered with beaten sheet lead. Many of the old churches, such as those at Lachenaie and Ange Gardien, have only one lantern; but two-lantern spires are more common in the later churches. Double western towers began to appear about the middle of the eighteenth century. The first church designed with this feature was at Cap Santé which was built between 1755 and 1763. The church at Ste. Famille on the Island of Orleans has three towers on the west front, but this is an unusual feature.

In the early nineteenth century the west fronts of many parish churches became somewhat more formal and elaborate. The church at Charlesbourg, for example, which dates from 1828, has plastered white-washed walls with a large gable pediment between the two spires. Others have curved baroque gables. The age of the unpretentious village church with its simple, pleasing lines was ending.

Painting

Painting in the early French period was not as important as architecture and some of the other arts. The first paintings were religious subjects or portraits of clerical figures. But the subject matter was soon broadened to include lay persons as well as members of the clergy. Portrait painting assumed more importance as time went on and was the most successful branch of painting in this early period.

Some of the very first painting was done by priests and nuns who devoted their spare time to decorating churches and other religious institutions. Most of them were amateurs whose acquaintance with European styles was rather slight.

Mère Marie de l'Incarnation, the famous superior of the Ursulines in Canada from 1639 to 1672, was a painter as well as a skilled craftswoman in other fields; and Mère Maufile de Saint-Louis is said to have painted the panels in the chapel of the Hôpital-Général at Quebec. Among the Jesuits, Père Pierron, a missionary to the Iroquois in 1668, used painting to bring out more vividly the point of his lessons.

Religious paintings were also done by professional artists who came out from France to spend varying lengths of time in Canada. They painted in the French seventeenth-century style, sometimes copying old masterpieces. Jacques Leblond dit Latour (1670-1715), better known as a sculptor, arrived in 1690 and remained here until his death. He made several pictures for the Quebec Seminary and also painted a portrait of Bishop Laval. Père Hugues Pommier, who served as a parish priest between 1664 and 1677, left a number of paintings of traditional religious subjects.

Perhaps the best known of these early professional artists was Frère Luc (1614-1685) who had studied both in France and Italy before coming to Quebec as a Récollet friar in 1670. Although only in Canada for fifteen months, he decorated many churches, monasteries and convents in a style found in paintings of the same period in France.

But the most interesting art of this early period are the pictures by local craftsmen, some of whom were trained in the school at St. Joachim, while others had no training at all. Many of these paintings are anonymous, and in their flat style and simplicity of composition they have the charm of "folk" painting, that is, painting by self-taught artists. Some of the best are votive pictures (pictures which commemorate an occasion when the donor received a special favour from one of the saints). One of these is the *Portrait of Madame Riverin and Her Four Children at Prayer*, painted in 1703 and now in the Commemorative Chapel of Ste. Anne de Beaupré.



Unknown Painter. *Portrait of Madame Riverin and Her Four Children at Prayer.*
Collection: Commemorative Chapel, Ste. Anne de Beupré

Another type of folk art are the portraits of persons connected with the Church. Michel Dessailant de Richeterre (active 1701-1710) has left several portraits of nuns, notably one of Mère Louise Soumande de Saint-Augustin, painted after her death in 1708. The Congrégation de Notre-Dame has preserved a realistic portrait of Mère Marguerite Bourgeois painted by Pierre Le Ber (1669-1707) in 1700. Among other artists of this early period were Jacquier *dit* Leblond and Paul Beaucourt.

The son of Paul Beaucourt, François Beaucourt (1740-1794) belonged to a new generation of artists who responded

to the growing demand for religious and lay portraiture. Most of these men seem to have had no formal training; a very few others had studied in Europe. The younger Beaucourt, for example, went to France in 1772 and was one of the first to re-establish contact with European art after a period of isolation. About 1780 he settled down in Montreal where he lived until his death in 1794. His *Portrait of a Negress*, 1786 (McCord Museum, Montreal), reflects the style of the eighteenth-century French artist, Fragonard, who was an important influence in Beaucourt's development.

A younger artist than Beaucourt was Joseph Légaré (1795-1855) who was largely self-taught. He gained some knowledge and experience in restoring paintings that had been brought to Canada after the French Revolution. Later he painted portraits, scenes of Indian and *habitant* life as well as Quebec landscapes. These landscapes, painted in a semi-primitive style, are among his most interesting work, and examples may be seen in the Museum of the Province of Quebec at Quebec city.

The simplified classicism of Antoine Plamondon (1804-1895) and Théophile Hamel (1817-1870) takes us into the nineteenth century. Between 1826 and 1830 Plamondon studied in Paris with the classicist Paulin Guérin, a pupil of Jacques-Louis David, and travelled elsewhere in Europe. On his return to Quebec he painted a great many religious pictures, most of them copies of well known masterpieces. But when he turned to portraiture, he produced work that had a pleasant harmony of composition and colouring and a surface quality like enamel. His portraits of nuns and other religious figures and of various members of the Pelletier family are among his best works. There is also his fresh and appealing *Chasse aux tourtes*, 1853, in the Art Gallery of Toronto. In this picture Plamondon used landscape as a background to his portraits of three boys resting under a tree after a hunting expedition.



Antoine Plamondon. *La Chasse aux tourtes*. Art Gallery of Toronto

Théophile Hamel worked under Plamondon for a time and later went to Europe where he spent three years travelling and studying in Belgium, France, and Italy. On his return to Canada he lived mostly in Quebec until his death in 1870. Hamel also was above all a portrait painter. In Europe he acquired a love of warm colour which was reflected in the amber flesh tones and brightly coloured draperies characteristic of his portraits. His *Self-Portrait* in the National

Gallery of Canada, painted in 1857, shows his meticulous attention to detail, his use of rich colours, and his ability to portray the inner character of his subject as well as the outer appearance.

Decorative Arts

The Ursuline nuns and other religious orders were responsible for introducing into Canada various decorative arts including embroidery, needlework, lacemaking, the gilding of church ornaments, and the making of silk flowers. The Ursulines in particular were very skilful and energetic in teaching these arts to both French and Indian girls. Many of these young girls proved to be extremely apt pupils who, when they returned to their home parishes, decorated the village churches and taught others what they had learned. In this way the arts which the Ursulines had brought with them from France were spread abroad not only in Quebec but in other parts of North America.

These decorative arts reached their highest and most artistic form in the embroidered altar-cloths and church vestments which were made by the nuns and their pupils to meet the needs of the churches and clergy. Marie de l'Incarnation was herself an expert needlewoman but unfortunately very little of this early work of the Ursulines has been preserved for us because of a fire which destroyed the convent in 1686.

The most brilliant pupil of the Ursulines was Jeanne Le Ber, the daughter of a rich Montreal merchant. She lived at the Quebec convent between 1674 and 1677, and gradually developed a personal style of her own which was very different from the classic manner of the Ursulines. On her return to Montreal she introduced the art of embroidery into the convent of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame where her work was regarded as a model and an inspiration for many generations.

Some of the altar frontals embroidered by Jeanne Le Ber are quite perfect technically and strikingly beautiful. Her delicate needlework, subtle use of colours, and skilfully interwoven motifs recall the pieces embroidered at Versailles towards the end of the reign of Louis XIV. A fine example of her work, done about 1700, is a large altar frontal which is preserved in the Museum of Notre-Dame Church, Montreal. The background is worked in gold and silver threads, and the design which centres on a dove with outstretched wings between two large baskets of flowers, is embroidered in gold and coloured silks.

The great period of embroidery in New France lasted from 1671 to 1760. Design was learned as part of the art of embroidery and every artist invented a new design for each piece. Copying was something quite unknown. Five of the most beautiful altar frontals of this period, now preserved in the convent of the Ursulines, Quebec, are known by the particular design embroidered in the centre medallion. Those depicting the Assumption and the Nativity are attributed to Mère Marie Lemaire des Anges, one of the finest artists in embroidery of the period.

For many years the Ursulines and other nuns continued to practise and teach this delicate and exacting art, but as time went on the purity of their style was weakened and a certain heaviness and exaggeration crept in. Even the chasuble which the Ursulines embroidered in 1789 in commemoration of their hundred and fiftieth anniversary in Canada, lacked the inventiveness of the work produced during their great period. The decline of this traditional art was hastened by a number of factors, the most important of which were the infiltration of repoussé cardboard, painted paper, and velvet for use as altar frontals in place of embroidery, the increasing popularity of lay teachers, and the introduction of imported altar-cloths and church vestments.



Altar Frontal (Assumption design).

Collection: Convent of the Ursulines, Québec. Photo: Detroit Institute of Arts

Sculpture

Wood sculpture was taught in the school at St. Joachim, probably as early as 1670, so that by the end of the seventeenth century there were already trained sculptors in Canada. After the school ceased to exist early in the eighteenth century, young woodcarvers were trained by the apprenticeship system, and the greater part of their work continued to be devoted to church decoration.

For the next one hundred and fifty years, through several generations of highly skilled craftsmen, a vigorous and distinctive style of wood sculpture developed in Canada. Both design and technique were passed on in an unbroken chain from master to apprentice. The general style was that of the periods of Louis XIV and Louis XVI with traces of the Louis XV period, but the local variations were Canadian in the hands of Quebec-trained sculptors. Although much of its freshness and originality were lost after the middle of the nineteenth century when influences from the Classic and Gothic Revivals began to appear, the Quebec school of wood sculpture has been felt as an influence almost to the present day. In fact, Louis Jobin, an important woodcarver in the old tradition, died as recently as 1928. Fine examples of Quebec woodcarving may be seen in the Museum of the Province of Quebec which has the largest public collection of this kind of work.

The material used most often was Canadian white pine, though statues and altar-pieces were sometimes carved of hardwood. Figures varied in size from statues of life size to little statuettes for altar-pieces. The general scheme of decoration was established by tradition but the style of a particular carver gave individuality to each church.

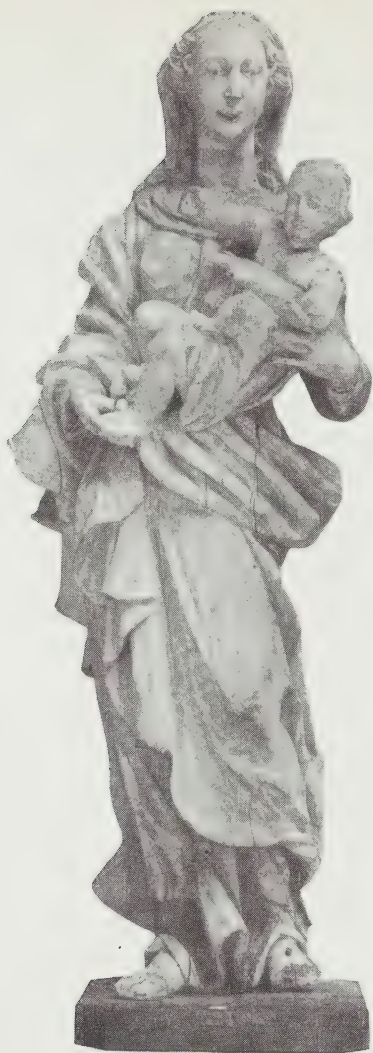
Only fragments of seventeenth-century sculpture have been preserved because of the destruction of many buildings by fire. Altar-pieces survive from the original churches of Ste. Anne de Beaupré and Ange Gardien, probably made about

1700 by Jacques Leblond *dit* Latour whose work as a painter has already been mentioned. He was in charge of instruction in the arts at the school at St. Joachim between 1690 and 1706. Another early instructor at the school was Denis Mallet (c.1670-1704) who came from Normandy in 1690 and of whose work only fragments remain. A contemporary of these men in Montreal was Charles Chaboillez (1654-1708), also a native of France. Little is known of his work except that he carved an altar for the Récollet church of Montreal in 1702.

An interesting piece of early eighteenth-century work is the carved wood altar frontal in the church at Jeune Lorette (Loretteville). Its distinguishing feature is the background which is silvered and on which is drawn with a point a design depicting two wigwams and an Indian woman worshipping in front of a church. It is believed to be the only piece of church decoration that shows Indian influence and may have been the work of a Huron carver taught by a French craftsman.

The leading sculptors of the eighteenth century were the Levasseur family in Quebec. The most important members of this family were Noël Levasseur (1680-1740), his cousin, Pierre-Noël Levasseur (1690-1770), and two sons, François-Noël (1703-1794) and Jean-Baptiste Antoine (1717-1775). From information obtained in church records it is clear that these artists carried out an enormous amount of work. Between 1732 and 1736 they carved the retable, or altar wall, and altar-pieces of the chapel in the Ursuline Convent at Quebec. This was their most important work and it includes some of the finest wood sculpture in Canada. When the old chapel was taken down in 1901, this woodwork was preserved and erected again in the new one. Pierre-Noël Levasseur's finest sculpture was carved for the interior of the Jesuit Church at Quebec in 1751.

Other eighteenth-century sculptors include the Labrosse family in Montreal and Gilles Bolvin (1711-1766) in Trois



Paul Labrosse (attrib.). *Virgin and Child*.
Art Gallery of Toronto (Gift of Walter C. Laidlaw, 1935)

Rivières. Although it seems evident that the Labrosses were sculptors of considerable distinction, very little work remains that can definitely be attributed to them. Gilles Bolvin's rich carving may be seen at its best in the altar-piece which he executed in 1737 for the church of St. Charles at Lachenaie near Montreal. It was preserved when the old church was torn down about 1882 and stands in the present church which was built on the same site.

Though sculptors tended to exercise a greater degree of initiative and originality after 1760, when direct ties with France were cut, basically their style remained much the same. With some variations and innovations they continued to carve in the rococo (or eighteenth-century French) manner until the whole tradition lost its vitality in the mid-nineteenth century.

In Quebec the successors of the Levasseurs were the Baillairgé family. In 1781 François Baillairgé (1759-1830) returned from a period of study in Paris with a taste for classical severity of style. He and his son Thomas (1791-1859) went into partnership and became the leading architectural sculptors in Quebec. They did a large amount of church carving in and around the city in a style which is distinctly their own and which exerted a deep influence on the art of Quebec. One of their finest combined achievements was the altar and baldachin, or canopy over the altar, made in 1816, for the church of St. Joachim (Montmorency) in which the new, more classic manner is revealed. Thomas Baillairgé designed and executed the interior of the church at Ste. Famille on the Island of Orleans after 1820. Two charming statuettes of saints, carved by the Baillairgés about 1800, may be seen in the National Gallery of Canada.

In Montreal one of the leading sculptors of the second half of the eighteenth century was Philippe Liébert (1732-1804). He was born at Nemours in France and came to Montreal some time before 1761. Contemporary records show that he did a great deal of work in the Montreal district, but unfortu-

nately most of it has disappeared. An altar-piece which he made for the high altar of the church at Sault au Récollet about 1770 is still in place in the church, and those in St. Michel at Vaudreuil and St. Martin on the Ile-Jésus are attributed to him.

In the early nineteenth century a rivalry had developed between the Montreal craftsmen, who as a rule were trained in the old apprentice system, and the Quebec sculptors with their more scholarly and professional background. The Montreal school was dominated by Louis Quévillon (1749-1823) and the associates with whom he worked. Their style was based on the old-fashioned rococo of an earlier period which was distinguished by such decorations as scrolls, wreaths, delicate arabesques and interlacing forms. An excellent example of the Quévillon style is the interior of the church at St. Mathias near Chambly.

Silver

Still another aspect of the artistic flowering in Quebec was the art of the silversmith. A good many of the most beautiful and skilfully wrought pieces were done between 1770 and 1830. During this period the greatest craftsmen often combined French styles with English classical influences to produce graceful, charming, and sometimes strikingly original work.

In the early days of the colony much of the silver was imported from France. The principal demand came from the Church, but the seigneurs and richer inhabitants also required silver for domestic purposes. As the community grew, it was no longer possible to meet the increasing demand by importation alone and so a local craft developed. Owing to the scarcity of silver, coins were used as the material, or old silver was reworked.

These early silversmiths probably came from France or received their training there. But once established in Canada, they taught their craft to Canadian apprentices who frequently



François Ranvoyzé. *Silver: Ciborium, Monstrance and Chalice.* Various Collections

carried on the workshop at the death of the master. Gradually they perfected their art which culminated in the work of Ranvoyzé, Amiot, and others in Quebec as well as many fine craftsmen in Montreal.

François Ranvoyzé (1739-1819), generally considered to be the greatest of the Canadian silversmiths, was born in Quebec. He did his best work between 1770 and 1790. His output was so large that there was scarcely a parish which did not possess at least one of his chalices, ciboriums, monstrances, sanctuary lamps, censers, candlesticks, or other objects of religious significance. He also made cups, bowls, spoons, and forks for domestic use.

In a good deal of his work Ranvoyzé followed the standard patterns and techniques of the eighteenth century, but he has also left a number of pieces of startling beauty and originality. Fruit and flower garlands form the basis of his most characteristic designs. A number of these graceful pieces, each having a peculiarly attractive sparkle, are now in Quebec in such collections as those of the Basilica, Hôtel-Dieu, the Seminary, and the Archevêché. A particularly fine example is a chalice decorated with cherubs and garlands, made in 1779, which may be seen in the collection of the Ursuline Convent, Quebec.

Jean Amiot, of whom we first hear in 1767, was the founder of a long line of silversmiths. Laurent Amiot (1764-1839), probably his brother, was for a short time an apprentice of Ranvoyzé. In much of his domestic silver, as well as silver for the Church, Laurent Amiot combined beauty with utility. In the Archevêché of Quebec is a flagon with olive wreath and acanthus decoration which shows this fine craftsman at his best.

On the death of Laurent Amiot, François Sasseville (1797-1864), his old apprentice, became head of the workshop. Sasseville's nephew, Pierre Lespérance (1819-1882), succeeded his uncle in 1864, and when Lespérance died, he in turn was succeeded by Ambroise Lafrance. Lafrance died in 1905, the last of the old Quebec master silversmiths.

In fact, as early as the middle of the century, silver merchants who sold work made by others had appeared, and their arrival on the scene marked the decline of craftsmen who sold their own work. Firms of jewellers and watchmakers began to import their wares from abroad and to sell more and more factory-made products. Gradually the art of the silversmith, like the many other fine crafts of Quebec, which had been developed to a high point of perfection by generations of skilled and devoted craftsmen, was engulfed in the industrialization of our age.

CHAPTER II

BRITISH COLONIAL PERIOD

BRITISH colonial art of the latter half of the eighteenth century and first half of the nineteenth was different in many ways from French colonial art. For one thing, most of the artists were birds of passage rather than permanent members of a closely-knit community as was the case in Quebec. Then too, the English colonies themselves were newer and less deeply rooted in the soil and there was no long, local tradition of craftsmanship. Nevertheless many artists left behind valuable documentary records which at their best capture the true flavour of pioneer life.

Early Portraits

With the increasing prosperity of the towns, a demand grew among the more prominent citizens to have likenesses of themselves and their families preserved for posterity. Portrait painters who came from England and the continent, possessing varying degrees of training and skill, appeared on the scene to meet this demand. Most of them worked in the tradition of the English school of portrait painting.

Wilhelm von Moll Berczy (1748-1813), a native of Saxony, reached Canada by a devious route. As a colonizing agent for the London Land Company he brought a group of German settlers to New York state in 1792. Two years later he transferred them to Markham Township, north of Toronto. Berczy himself settled at Markham for a number of years before

moving to Montreal where he turned to painting. He was active as an artist in Montreal and Quebec, and designed buildings in the latter city as well as in Toronto.

Berczy's work as a painter is rather uneven, but he has left several interesting portraits including those of Joseph Brant, the famous Mohawk chief, and Sir Robert Prescott, the Governor General of Canada. One of his most attractive paintings is the portrait group of the *Woolsey Family*, 1809 (National Gallery of Canada), which resembles the typical English "conversation-piece" of the period, that is, a painting of an animated group of figures.

Robert Field (c.1769-1819) came to North America in the same year as Berczy. Field had been trained as an artist in London and during the fifteen years that he spent in the United



Wilhelm von Moll Berczy. *The Woolsey Family*.
National Gallery of Canada (Gift of Major Edgar C. Woolsey, 1952)

States had earned his living painting miniatures and portraits and making engravings. After he came to Halifax in 1808, he devoted most of his time to portraits. Field was the best of the nineteenth-century portrait painters in the Maritimes. Many of the notable men in the Halifax of that day sat for him, including *Commander John Harper*, whose portrait, painted in 1813 and now in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada, clearly show the influence of the English School.

Another Maritime artist was William Valentine (1798-1849), whose name is associated with the daguerreotype process of photography which he introduced into Halifax about 1844. Very little is known of Valentine's life. He apparently settled in Halifax about 1813 and for a number of years after his arrival was obliged to work as a house painter and decorator. It was not until 1830 that his ability as an artist began to be recognized. Most of his best work was done during a period of seven years after his return from London in 1837. When he tried to combine a career as photographer with that of portrait painter his fortunes as an artist suffered seriously. An interesting example of Valentine's work is his *Self-Portrait* of about 1845 in the Nova Scotia Museum in Halifax.

George Theodore Berthon (1806-1892) arrived in Canada a little later than the artists who have already been mentioned. His parents were French, but he was born in Vienna where his father had been commissioned to paint a portrait of the Emperor Francis I. Berthon studied under his father and the great French classicist painter, Jacques-Louis David. In Toronto where he worked from 1844 until his death in 1892 he had many commissions among the professional classes and the old established families. Probably his finest and most representative work is to be found among the portraits of chief justices, chancellors, and judges in the collection of Osgoode Hall, Toronto.

The Documentary Picture

The best product of the age was the documentary picture which was full of regional flavour and has left us with an interesting and valuable record of historical events, colonial society, and views of town and country.

Topographical Artists

Many of the artists who painted this type of picture were British officers who travelled about different parts of the country recording what they saw, often for scientific or military purposes. Those who were officers in the Royal Engineers and Royal Artillery had been trained in the art of topographical drawing and painting at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, England. Although their chief aim in Canada was accurate description, some of them portrayed the new sights and scenes with sensibility and feeling. But it was natural that they should view the Canadian scene through British eyes as nearly all were transients or travellers in a country where they had no roots.

Most topographical pictures were water colours painted in the manner of the English topographical school which became popular in the eighteenth century. Topography, or the art of portraying places, is distinguished from the classical tradition of the idealized landscape by its truth to the scene or landscape depicted. The original water colours and sketches were often either lithographed or engraved and then sold as a series or published in book form.

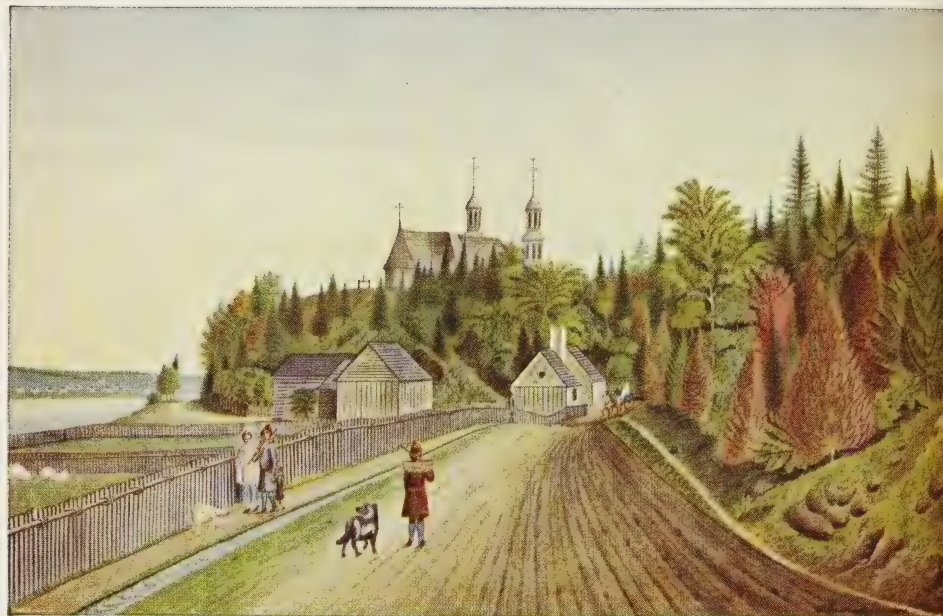
A great many pictorial records of scenes and events were made in the Maritimes. An early example of a military scene is *Wolfe's Expedition at Miramichi* by Hervey Smyth (active 1759-1770). This is an oil, painted perhaps after one of Smyth's drawings of 1759, and now in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada. A leading topographical artist in this region at a somewhat later date was William Eager (1796?-

1839) whose work shows the influence of English water-colour drawings. A native of Ireland, Eager painted in Newfoundland for a time but he did most of his work in and around Halifax. Among his many scenes of landmarks and local events in that city is the *Victoria Coronation Celebration*, a water colour painted in 1838.

While some artists were carefully recording various parts of the Maritimes, others were examining the topography of Lower Canada in painstaking detail. The charm of Quebec must have appealed to George Heriot (1766-1844), born in Scotland, for he has left us a valuable record of its streets and buildings as they looked at the beginning of the last century. Captain James Peachey (active 1781, d. 1799), for a time attached to the office of Samuel Holland, surveyor-general, also painted many views of Quebec. Richard Short (active 1759-1764), who is equally noted for his work in Halifax, published a series of twelve engravings of Quebec in 1761, and Colonel James Pattison Cockburn (1779-1847) has left numerous water colours of scenes in Lower Canada as well as in other parts of the country.

Another alert and sensitive observer of life and landscape in the St. Lawrence valley and the Maritime region was Lieutenant-General Thomas Davies (c.1737-1813) who also travelled widely in other parts of North America. His minutely detailed and richly coloured landscapes, peopled with small figures, have a delightful freshness and charm, which make him the best of all his kind.

Among the topographical artists there was inevitably a diversity of style and talent. Some were chiefly concerned with accuracy of representation. Others showed a greater degree of inventiveness both in choice of subject matter and in handling. A picture that falls into this latter class is the anonymous view in oils of *Fredericton, New Brunswick*, dated 1823, and belonging to the William H. Coverdale collection, Montreal.



Thomas Davies. *A View of Château Richer Church near Quebec.*
National Gallery of Canada

Henry James Warre (1819-c.1898) also went beyond literal recording when he emphasized the distance and mystery of the mountains in the sketches which he brought back from his trip to the Canadian West. As an officer in the Royal Engineers he was sent on a secret mission to the Oregon Territory in 1845 in connection with boundary disputes. One of the many sketches he made on this trip, *Distant View of the Rocky Mountains*, may be seen in the Public Archives at Ottawa. This picture suggests that Warre was a disciple of the great English artist, Turner.

William Henry Bartlett (1809-1854) is an example of the professional topographical artist who published books of the scenery of various parts of the world. Born in England, he

was articled in 1823 to an architect who employed him on topographical work. Between 1836 and 1852 he visited Canada four times, travelling throughout the eastern part of the country. In 1842 a collection of engravings made from his sketches and drawings appeared in a book entitled *Canadian Scenery*.

In the mid-nineteenth century several leading documentary painters came to Canada and stayed for longer periods. Cornelius Krieghoff (1815?-1872), whose brightly coloured and animated scenes are characteristic of the popular school of Düsseldorf in Germany, arrived about 1840 and was active in Quebec until about 1866. He died in Chicago in 1872. Paul Kane (1810-1871) emigrated from Ireland about 1819 when he was a boy of eight or nine. Although he spent many years travelling in Europe and North America, Toronto was his headquarters and he died there in 1871. A lesser known painter, Robert Whale (1805-1887), was born in England but made his home at Brantford, Ontario, from 1864 until his death.

Cornelius Krieghoff

Krieghoff led a nomadic and adventurous life in his early days and in fact retained something of the carefree gaiety of the *coureur-de-bois* for much of his life. He was born possibly in Amsterdam and learned his art in Holland and Germany. He then set out to earn his way through Europe as an itinerant musician and artist. He went to the United States in 1837 and is said to have painted the Seminole rebellion in Florida. About 1840 he came to Canada, settling first at Longueuil and later Montreal.

At Longueuil he began to paint the villagers and interior scenes in their cottages, often infusing a touch of wry humour into his work. He also made frequent trips to the Indian village of Caughnawaga where he sketched the Indians as they camped on the edge of the river or ran the Lachine rapids in their



Cornelius Krieghoff. *Habitant Farm*. National Gallery of Canada

light birchbark canoes. These figures are, however, rather stiff and static, lacking the movement and lively colour that was characteristic of his later work.

In 1853 Krieghoff moved to Quebec, and during the next fifteen years some of his best pictures were painted. He was a very prolific worker: over seven hundred of his canvases have been catalogued. Frequent sketching expeditions took him all over the region around Quebec and up the Ottawa River, as far as the Chaudière Falls. His two themes were the Quebec *habitants* and the Indians, particularly the Hurons of Lorette and the Iroquois of Caughnawaga. He was a humorous and sympathetic observer who enjoyed and understood the people among whom he lived. He painted all the details of their lives—the small cabins in the wilderness, the sturdy horses drawing little red sleighs, the dog barking and the children running out to greet their father over the icy ground, and revellers leaving Jolifou's inn after an evening's celebration. Many of these homely scenes were painted against a background of glistening winter snow or bright autumn foliage. His use of clear and bright colours gives some of his best pictures, such as *Habitant Farm*, 1849 (National Gallery of Canada) and a *Settler's Log Cabin*, 1856 (Art Gallery of Toronto) a remarkable freshness and transparency.

Paul Kane

At about the same time as Krieghoff was working in Lower Canada, Paul Kane was painting the Indians of the western plains. During his early days in York as a boy and young man, Kane was fascinated by the Indians whom he frequently visited in their encampment on the outskirts of the town. It became his ambition to study abroad and then devote himself to painting a series of pictures illustrating the life of the North American Indian. In 1841 he succeeded in going to Europe, where he travelled and copied in the museums for nearly four years.

Upon his return to Canada in 1844, Kane immediately made plans to set about realizing the second part of his boyhood ambition. His first undertaking was a five-month sketching expedition into the Georgian Bay area in 1845, but he was anxious to carry out a much more ambitious scheme. This was to penetrate into the interior of the Canadian West where he would see the Indians in their primitive setting. Finally on May 9, 1846, with the co-operation of the Hudson's Bay Company, he set off on his extraordinary journey which took him by canoe, boat, and pack-horse across the great prairies, over the Rocky Mountains, and eventually to Fort Vancouver. He returned to Toronto by more or less the same route after an absence of nearly three years.

This journey, although extremely arduous, afforded Kane endless opportunities to paint the Indians and the scenery through which he passed. He brought back more than five hundred sketches, which provided him with sufficient material to work with for the remainder of his life. He also kept a diary during his travels and this was published in 1859 under the title, *The Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America*.

Kane was an amateur painter whose compositions and colours were influenced by the canvases which he had seen in European galleries. But though the importance of his work lies chiefly in its documentary value rather than in its intrinsic artistic merit, it has a naive charm. In his detailed paintings of Indian life and customs he has left an important historical record. One such canvas is his *Blackfoot Chief and Subordinates* (National Gallery of Canada) which shows the infinite care which he took to present accurately all the details of costume and ornaments.

The third artist in this group is Robert Whale (1805-1887) who was born at Altarnum in Cornwall, England. He studied in London and had acquired a local reputation as a landscape and portrait artist before migrating to Canada in the early



Paul Kane. *Blackfoot Chief and Subordinates*. National Gallery of Canada

1850's. For a time he settled at Burford, Ontario, but he moved to Brantford about 1864 and remained there for the rest of his life.

In Brantford Whale pursued his profession, painting portraits of well known men in the district and also scenes in the Grand River valley and other parts of western Ontario. One of his landscapes was awarded a silver medal at the International Exhibition held in London, England in 1862. The influence of the English landscape artist, Richard Wilson, is apparent in some of Whale's best work, such as his *View of*



Robert Whale. *The Canadian Southern Railway at Niagara.*
National Gallery of Canada

Hamilton, painted in 1853, and now in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada. He has also left paintings of early trains at Niagara Falls, and several amusing compositions of nude figures with Ontario landscape backgrounds.

Folk Art

The popular arts and crafts which sprang from the needs of the people were the basic North American kind of art in the pioneer period. Many crafts were common to both Canada and the United States. The technique of the hooked rug, for example, apparently spread from New England into Cape Breton Island, the province of Quebec, and other parts of Canada, where new designs were developed.

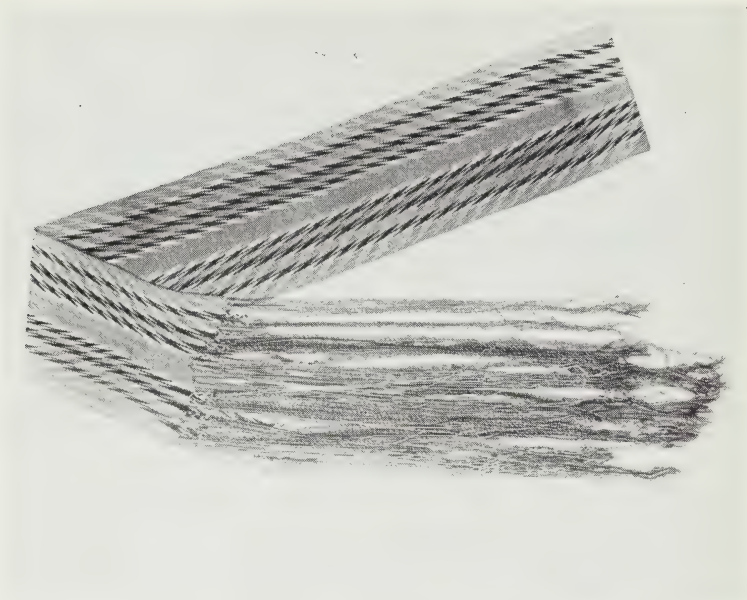
The weaving of bed coverlets in gay colours and complex designs was another early American craft. In Canada, a kind of tufted bedspread was made by the women of Charlevoix County in the Baie St. Paul area of Quebec about the middle

of the nineteenth century. The patterns, made of tufts of wool, took the form of conventionalized pine trees, figures, religious motifs, Greek key patterns, Celtic designs, and the like. Some of the anonymous craftsmen who did this original type of weaving were evidently creative artists with a keen sense of colour and decoration. Many of the old bedspreads have been collected by the National Gallery of Canada and other museums.

The *ceintures fléchées* or "arrow sashes" involve another type of weaving altogether. These were done by a technique of finger weaving or braiding which the French may have originally learned from the Indians and developed into a more elaborate form. Although various types of woollen sashes existed in North America before 1800, the arrow sash proper originated in the L'Assomption district, northeast of Montreal. Two parish divisions of L'Assomption—St. Jacques de l'Achigan and St. Marie Salomé—were the centre of the craft. That is why arrow sashes are sometimes called Assomption or Achigan sashes. But all three names refer to the same type of brightly coloured sash, woven of fine wool with flowing fringes, of which the largest and finest examples are more than fifteen feet long, including the fringe, and more than nine inches wide.

Most of the Assomption sashes were made for the Montreal fur traders. They were worn by *voyageurs* on their long journeys through the Northwest and were also used as a trade article. The design, with few exceptions, consisted of a wide red band in the centre that ran from one end to the other. This band was barbed along the edges like a series of continuous arrows. On both sides of this band or core ran a series of parallel zigzags in varied colours. Because of the length of the strands, all sashes were woven from the middle towards the ends.

The art of making sashes reached its highest development between 1840 and 1860. Some fine examples from this period



Ceinture fléchée (Arrow Sash). National Gallery of Canada

have been collected by the National Gallery of Canada. Towards the end of the century the craft began to vanish when the lessened demand could be met by a much cheaper machine-made product. In recent years however an attempt has been made to save the technique of sash-making from oblivion.

Painting of the period which may be classified as folk art is characterized by flatness, angularity, and simplicity of composition. An example of this type of painting is *Portrait of a Lady*, c.1840 (Montreal Museum of Fine Arts), attributed to Louis Dulongpré (1754-1843). In this portrait, one of the best of its kind, the artist has achieved a very pleasing effect by his precision of line and has managed to infuse a considerable amount of character into his subject. Louis Chrétien de Heer,

born about 1760 in Guebwiller, Alsace, and known to have been in Quebec between 1787 and 1789, was also a folk artist who has left a number of portraits of religious figures.

Another aspect of folk art consisted of woodcarving by small craftsmen working in the Quebec tradition of wood sculpture. Many of these artists who produced simple, honest pieces of sculpture, often to express their own feelings of religious devotion, have remained unknown. An example of an early anonymous carving is the small eighteenth-century figure of the *Virgin* in the Art Gallery of Toronto. Later folk carvings took the form of birds and animals as well as religious figures.

The later woodcarver, Louis Jobin (1844-1928), who takes us well into the twentieth century, was an artistic descendant of the Baillairgé school of Quebec. His style was also affected by the Gothic Revival, yet had much of folk art about it. He considered himself an artisan rather than an artist, and during the latter years of his life he did his carving in a tiny workshop at Ste. Anne de Beaupré, surrounded by his angels, saints, and madonnas.

During his long life Jobin was very prolific as a sculptor. He was over eighty when he died at Ste. Anne de Beaupré in 1928, and his death seemed to symbolize the end of a long tradition. His work, which may be found scattered throughout the province and in other parts of North America, includes statues of angels and saints for churches, promontories, and crossroads; large crucifixes for roadside shrines; monumental figures, such as the Virgin of Cape Trinity above the Saguenay River; and equestrian groups like that of St. George and the Dragon in front of the church of St. Georges de Beauce. In the collections of the Museum of the Province of Quebec and the National Gallery of Canada are several figures of apostles which Jobin carved for the façade of the Church of Montmagny.

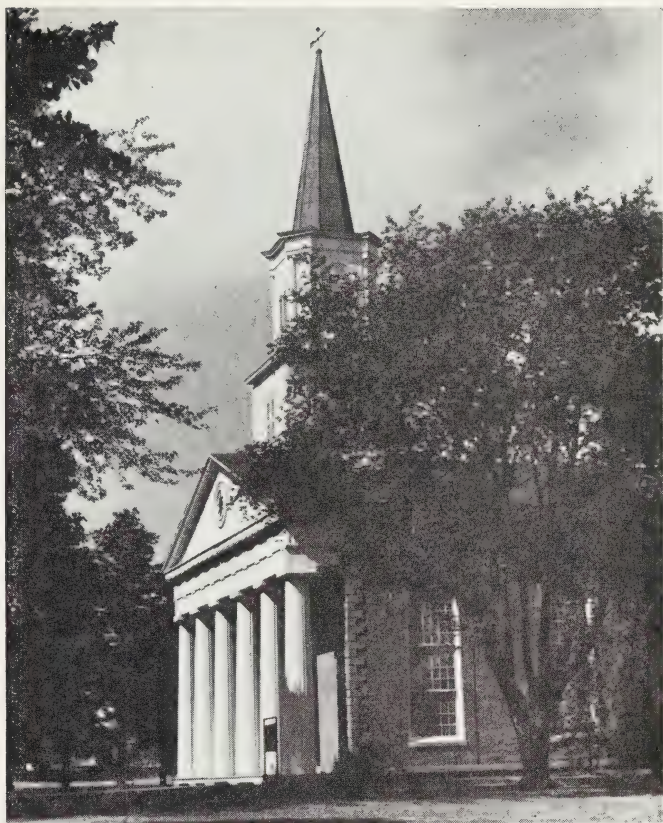
Architecture

Eighteenth and early nineteenth-century buildings in the British colonies were influenced by Georgian architecture in England and the United States. The Georgian style was brought into the Maritimes, the eastern townships of Quebec, and parts of Ontario by English and Scottish settlers and by United Empire Loyalists who emigrated from the United States about 1785 and after.

Georgian architecture represented a distinctively English modification of classical forms which had originally come into England from the Italian Renaissance. Across the Atlantic, this same style is called Colonial, and many examples survive in the eastern and southern states. The main differences between Georgian and Colonial lay in the material used. In England comparatively few houses were built wholly of timber, while in many parts of North America wood was the cheapest and most easily obtainable building material.

The Classic Revival which influenced architecture in England and other European countries towards the end of the eighteenth century was also felt very strongly in the United States (which tended to compare itself with Greek democracy and Roman republicanism) and was grafted into the existing Colonial tradition. Thus architecture in Canada during this period was Georgian in its essentials, with influences after 1800 from the American Classic Revival. The materials used were stone, brick, or wood, with perhaps a predominance of wood in the Maritimes and a greater amount of stone and brick in Upper Canada.

Some of the characteristics of the Georgian style in Canada were the symmetrical arrangement of windows round a central doorway; the fanlight, sidelight, and classical pilasters about the doorway; the low-pitched roofs; the very slight angle and projection of the eaves; the use of double-sash windows with many panes; and, in the case of larger buildings, a dignified portico in the form of a classic temple.



St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Photo: Neville Studios, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

In many of the older towns fine Georgian buildings still survive, but they are fast disappearing, particularly in the larger centres, before the demands of rapid expansion. In Halifax, for example, there is St. Paul's Church, built in 1750 in the wooden Georgian of New England. The Classic Revival is reflected in a number of later country churches, such as the

fine St. Andrew's at Niagara-on-the-Lake. This church, with its Doric temple-front, is of brick with wooden portico and spire.

After 1800, important buildings in the towns were built in a variety of English Georgian called the Palladian style. An outstanding example is Osgoode Hall, begun in 1829, which is one of the very few buildings left in Toronto dating from this period and one of the finest in the city. With its impressive portico covering two storeys and its rusticated lower storey, it embodies the dignity of the Palladian style.

In older Ontario communities like Perth, Guelph, Port Hope, Maitland, and Niagara-on-the-Lake, and in many towns and villages in the Atlantic provinces, houses illustrating the dignity, grace, and symmetrical design of the Georgian style may still be seen. Many of them reflect a Scottish, or simplified, version of the Georgian and illustrate the fine if rather severe work of Scottish stonemasons who settled in Canada. Perth and the surrounding district are particularly rich in large and small houses of this type. Especially fine examples are found in Poplar Hall at Maitland, the Blue Stone House at Port Hope, and Gorsebrook House in Halifax.

CHAPTER III

ART IN THE LATER NINETEENTH CENTURY

HERE we enter a better known period during which many of the larger buildings were built in the various "revival" styles which give eastern Canadian cities their basically romantic character. But among the arts painting was dominant now, and the first art societies and institutions were founded in response to a wave of nationalism and confidence in the future.

The Gothic Revival in Architecture

Our cities, growing up about mid-century, were stamped with the character of Victorian architecture with its various revivals of old forms, just as American cities had been affected in their beginnings, about 1800, by the earlier Classic Revival. Between the fifties and the seventies, the style used most widely in Canada was the Gothic Revival, which tended to remind people of old traditions transplanted in a new land.

The Gothic style of this period is represented by a number of churches and houses. The famous Notre-Dame in Montreal (1824-9), by the eccentric Irish-American James O'Donnell (1774-1830), and the Basilica of Notre-Dame in Ottawa (1841-6), are typical of the earlier phase of the Gothic Revival when Gothic ornament was applied to buildings of a Georgian character. St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Hamilton (1857) and St. Michael's Cathedral in Toronto (1845-7), both designed by William Thomas (1800-1860), and the Fredericton Cathe-



Thomas Fuller. *Drawing for Parliament Buildings, Ottawa.*
Public Archives of Canada

dral (1845) and Christ Church Cathedral in Montreal (1857), both by Frank Wills (d.1857), are other examples of mid-century Gothic. Earnscliffe, Sir John A. Macdonald's Ottawa home, is typical of the many Gothic mansions of the period with their carved ornament along the eaves. It was built by Thomas McKay about 1855 on a magnificent site overlooking the Ottawa River.

The greatest Victorian Gothic monument in the country as a whole, however, was the group of three original Parliament Buildings in Ottawa, begun in 1859. The central Parliament Block which, with the exception of the fine circular Library, was burnt in 1916, is now replaced by a modern structure (1919 ff.). The original building was one of the most ambitious examples of the style anywhere. Its architect, Thomas Fuller (1822-1898), combined elements of English, French, German, Flemish, and Italian medieval styles into a complex structure, topped with iron roof-crests and numerous spiny pinnacles. The East and West Blocks, built at the

same time, were designed by Frederick Stent and Augustus Laver. The three buildings were grouped in such a way as to form a large open rectangle, thus giving an impressive air of spaciousness to the whole.

Another prominent building of the period is University College, Toronto (1856-9) by F. W. Cumberland (1821-1881) and William G. Storm (1826-1892). It is in Norman style, then considered as a variety of Gothic.

Painting from the Sixties to the Eighties

By the time of Confederation, eastern Canada was a thriving, bustling region with much of its best arable land under cultivation and its cities taking shape and constantly growing. The frontier was being pushed north and westwards and the project of a trans-continental railway was exciting men's minds. People were proud of what they had already accomplished and were looking confidently into the future.

This first wave of nationalism was reflected in art in the founding of a number of institutions and societies both local and national. Exhibitions were held annually and some societies also conducted art schools which trained a new generation of native-born painters.

The Art Association of Montreal was founded in 1860, but it was almost exclusively an exhibiting society until about 1900 when it began to form a collection of paintings in its own gallery in Phillips Square (built in 1879). In 1872 the Ontario Society of Artists was established in Toronto. Four years later it opened an art school, which in 1912 developed into the present Ontario College of Art; the Society's connection with the school ended, however, in 1884. In the Maritimes, the Owens Art Gallery at Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick, was established in 1890.

The foundation of two important national institutions also dates from this period. The Royal Canadian Academy and the National Gallery of Canada both came into existence in 1880.

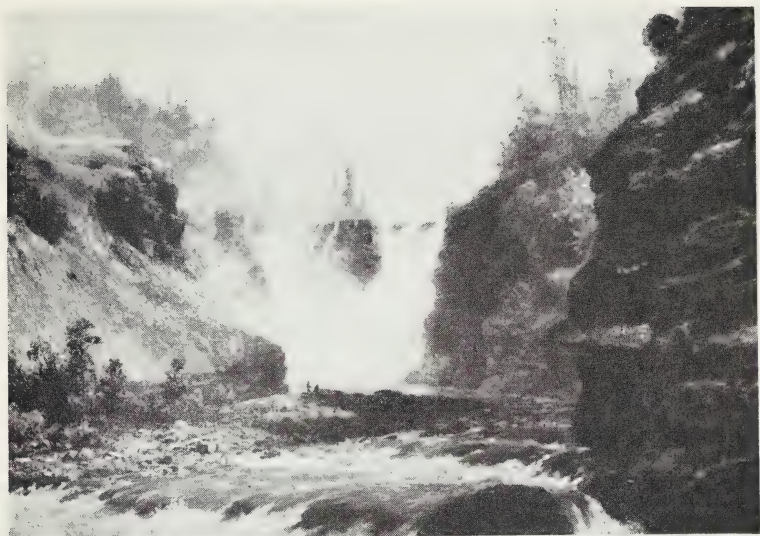
They were founded after a number of artists led by the painter Lucius R. O'Brien had gained the support of the Governor General, the Marquis of Lorne, and his wife, the Princess Louise (herself a painter), in their plan to place art on a firm official basis.

The co-operation of the Ontario Society of Artists and the Art Association of Montreal as well as the sympathetic interest of the Marquis of Lorne and the Princess Louise, made possible the formation of the Royal Canadian Academy. Since its inception the Academy has held annual exhibitions and elected its academicians and associates on the pattern of the Royal Academy in England.

The early growth of the National Gallery was slow. Not until 1910 was the first permanent director, Eric Brown (1877-1939), appointed. In that year too the pictures, which had been lodged with the Department of Public Works, were moved to the east wing of the Victoria Memorial Museum Building, and the foundations of the present collection and activities were laid. The purpose of the Gallery as stated in the Act of 1913 was not only (as in other countries) to form and maintain a national art collection but also—uniquely among national museums—to encourage and cultivate in the Canadian public an interest in the fine arts and to promote the interests generally of art in Canada.

Canadian painting from the sixties to the eighties was characterized by the curious nineteenth-century mixture of traditionalism and progress, romanticism and realism. The transition from the romantic picturesqueness of the earlier landscape painters, such as Krieghoff, to a greater factualism may be seen in the work of painters like Allan Edson.

Edson (1846-1888) was a Montreal painter who was born in Stanbridge, Quebec, in 1846. On several occasions he went to Europe for periods of painting and study. His landscapes possess a picturesque quality but the accent is on naturalism.



Lucius R. O'Brien. *Kakabeka Falls*. National Gallery of Canada

Mount Orford and the Owl's Head, 1870 (National Gallery of Canada) shows traces of the Hudson River School of landscape painters in the United States.

Henry Sandham (1842-1910) was one of the many artists of the period who gained their early experience at Notman's photographic studio in Montreal. William Notman employed artists to colour photographs by hand. The influence of the photographic technique may be seen in Sandham's *Hunters Returning*, 1877 (National Gallery of Canada) which is painted with infinite care for accurate detail.

In the eighties a new feeling developed for the strong compositional construction of a picture along with honest realism. *Kakabeka Falls*, 1882 (National Gallery of Canada), by Lucius R. O'Brien (1832-1899), with its well placed centre of interest and meticulous attention to detail, is typical of the

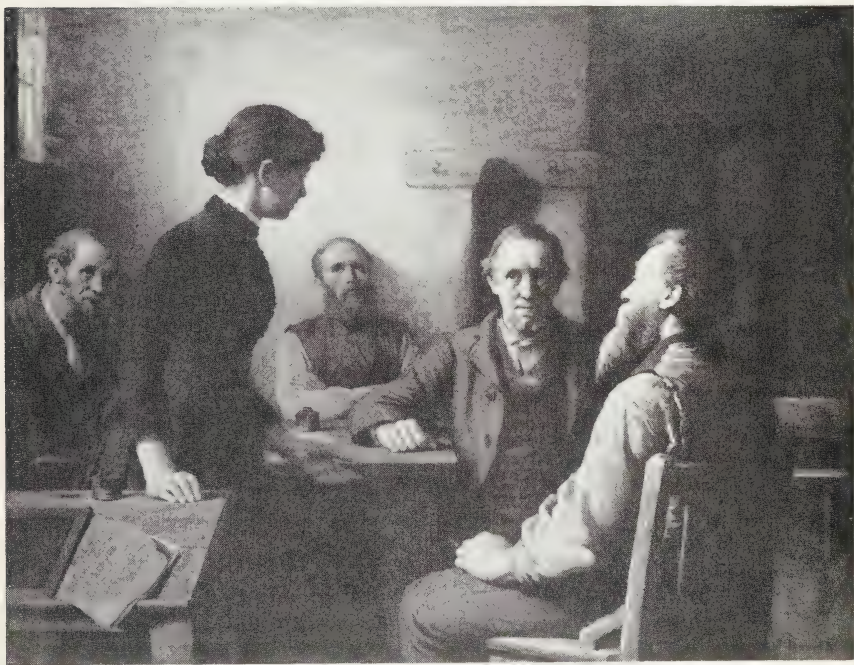
period. O'Brien was born at Shanty Bay, Ontario in 1832. He was trained as an engineer but became dissatisfied with his calling and, turning what had previously been a hobby into a profession, began to paint scenery in Ontario and Quebec. The lake country of Muskoka was for many years his favourite sketching ground, and he produced numerous water colours of the district which display his able draughtsmanship. O'Brien took a prominent part in the founding of early art institutions and was the first president of the Royal Canadian Academy.

John Arthur Fraser (1838-1898) was the driving force behind the formation of the Ontario Society of Artists. He had come to Montreal from Scotland in 1860 and soon got a position in William Notman's studio where he showed skill in the art of colouring photographs. The result of his success was that he was made a partner in the firm and moved to Toronto to open a business there under the name of Notman-Fraser. It was while in Toronto that he initiated the movement that led to the creation of the Ontario Society of Artists. As an artist, Fraser painted many landscapes both in eastern Canada and the far west in the realistic manner of the time. One of these is *The Rogers Pass*, 1886 (National Gallery of Canada) which with its golden glints reflects the optimism of the railway age.

The year 1882 saw the publication of *Picturesque Canada* which contained numerous illustrations of Canadian scenery engraved on wood from the original drawings. This monumental work which appeared in instalments had a wide circulation throughout the country and gave work to a number of Canadian painters including Fraser, Sandham, O'Brien and Robert Harris.

Robert Harris (1849-1919) came to Canada with his parents from Wales in 1856 and settled at Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. As a young man he showed promising artistic ability and went abroad to study in the early seventies. On his return to Canada he lived for a time in Toronto but later moved to Montreal where he became a teacher at the

Art Association. Harris is perhaps best known for his painting, *Fathers of Confederation* (1886), the original of which was unfortunately destroyed when the central Parliament Block was burnt in 1916. He was, however, probably best as a painter of the life of his times, and an example of this type of work is *A Meeting of School Trustees*, 1886 (National Gallery of Canada) which, with its story of an ardent young teacher confronting a group of stubborn trustees, suggests an underlying spirit of idealism.



Robert Harris. *A Meeting of School Trustees*. National Gallery of Canada

Architecture of the Eighties

The massive brownstone Romanesque, which originated in Boston with Henry Hobson Richardson, was a reaction to the flimsiness of Gothic Revival architecture. Characteristics of this style are its very heavy masonry and round-headed arches. Typical examples are to be found in many Canadian cities: the Ontario Legislative Buildings in Toronto (by R. A. Waite, 1890), city halls in Toronto (E. J. Lennox, 1890) and Hamilton (James Balfour, 1888), Victoria College in Toronto (William G. Storm, 1891), the earlier buildings of Queen's University at Kingston (H. B. Gordon, 1879 ff.), and Windsor Station in Montreal (Bruce Price, c.1890).

CHAPTER IV

THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

PAINTING is of first importance in this period which is distinguished by the influx of new European influences, culminating in the introduction of impressionism and post-impressionism.

Architecture

The turn of the century marked a transition from the ponderosity of the eighties to an age of greater elegance and refinement. The period from 1900 to 1930 is characterized by the "battle of the styles", different styles being promoted for different sorts of buildings: the Classic for banks and railway stations, the Gothic for churches, the Georgian or Tudor for houses, and so on.

The new central block of the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa, with its Peace Tower rising high above Parliament Hill, was built between 1919 and 1927 under John A. Pearson (1867-1940) and is an impressive monument in the Gothic style. The buildings of McMaster University, designed in 1930 by William Somerville (b. 1886), well represent the "collegiate Gothic". An example of the Classic style is provided by the Legislative Building at Regina, built in 1908 by Edward Maxwell (1868-1923).

A special style introduced into Canada was the "château-baronial", a combination of French and Scottish features. It was adopted early in the century as a distinctive Canadian style for use in government buildings and railway hotels. The



Edward Maxwell, Architect. *Legislative Building, Regina.*
Photo: Saskatchewan Government

style was introduced by Bruce Price, the American architect of the Château Frontenac, Quebec (1889 ff.). The Château Laurier, Ottawa (1910 ff.) by D. H. MacFarlane, is a later example in a more elegant French manner. Modern adaptations of this style in Ottawa are the Supreme Court Building (1938) by Ernest Cormier (b. 1885) and the Post Office (1938).

The Chicago School, which developed under the direction of Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright, also inspired a few Canadian buildings at this period. Windows in the form of horizontal openings and a purely functional structure were distinguishing features of this style. The Daly Building (c.1900) is an example of the Chicago School in Ottawa. Francis Sullivan, a Canadian pupil of Frank Lloyd Wright, was employed for a time by the Department of Public Works. With Wright's collaboration he designed a public library at

Pembroke, Ontario, and a recreational pavilion at Banff. Several post offices, including those at Shawville (Quebec) and Stonewall (Manitoba), also bear the stamp of the Wright style as interpreted by Sullivan.

The "Rich" Art of the Nineties

The art of the nineties now seems to us rather too full of romantic fancy, elegance, and poesy. The early work of the artists of this generation, however, carried on the best spirit of the eighties. Frederick M. Bell-Smith (1846-1923), for example, painted a rare social document in *Lights of a City Street*, 1894 (Robert Simpson Company, Toronto), a study of King and Yonge Streets in Toronto. He had studied painting in London and Paris before emigrating to Canada in 1867 with his father, John Bell-Smith, a portrait painter. They lived for a time in Hamilton before moving on to Toronto where the younger man painted realistic scenes of city life. Later he sketched in the Canadian Rockies but his paintings of mountain scenery such as *Mists and Glaciers of the Selkirks*, 1911 (National Gallery of Canada) are rather flimsy though very "refined".

The Barbizon landscape school in France, of which Millet was perhaps the best known exponent, was reflected in the work of Horatio Walker (1858-1938). Though born on a farm at Listowel, Ontario, Walker lived a large part of his life on the Island of Orleans. Here he found most of the material for his canvases. The early and relatively straightforward *Corner of Pig Lane, Quebec*, 1884 (Museum of the Province of Quebec) illustrates the pure Barbizon influence; the highly romantic *Oxen Drinking*, 1899 (National Gallery of Canada), is an example of his later work in which the "poetry of toil" is very obviously superimposed on rural Quebec.

Homer Watson (1855-1936), largely self-taught, worked for the greater part of his long life in the village of Doon,



Horatio Walker. *Oxen Drinking*. National Gallery of Canada

Ontario. The lush countryside of the Grand River valley with its great trees and lowering clouds formed the subject matter of most of his paintings. *On the Grand River at Doon*, 1887 (National Gallery of Canada) is a realistic, reticent early work reminiscent of the American artists, Winslow Homer and George Inness. In comparison, the later *Flood Gate*, 1900 (National Gallery of Canada) is an ambitious work in which Watson painted the Canadian landscape under the spell of the great English painter, Constable.

In a small Quebec village another self-taught artist, Ozias Leduc (1864-1955), for many years produced paintings having a mysterious, intimate, poetic quality. He was born at St. Hilaire on the Richelieu River, and except for short trips to London and Paris he scarcely left his native village. Early



Homer Watson. *On the Grand River at Doon*. National Gallery of Canada



Ozias Leduc. *Portrait of Madame Lebrun.*

Collection: Paul Gouin, Montreal

in his career he did some very fine portraits, such as the one of *Madame Lebrun*, 1899 (Paul Gouin collection, Montreal). During the latter part of his life he painted many murals for churches in the province. These religious compositions are rather elaborate and elegant in the spirit of 1900. Leduc provided the first great inspiration for Paul-Emile Borduas with whom he was linked by close ties of friendship and understanding. Other modern Quebec painters have also felt his influence.

A number of other artists typical of the turn of the century may be mentioned here.

William Blair Bruce (1859-1906) of Hamilton lived for many years in Europe where he painted in a manner reminiscent of the French artist, Rosa Bonheur. In 1895 he returned to Canada and spent some time portraying life on an Indian reserve. From this period dates his canvas, *The Walker of the Snow* (Art Gallery of Hamilton) which was inspired by the Indian legend used by Charles Dawson Shanly in his poem of the same name.

Paul Peel (1860-1892) also lived most of his adult life abroad and in fact died at Paris in 1892 when he was just thirty-two. An example of his typical combination of considerable technical skill and academic subject-matter is *Venetian Bather*, 1889 (National Gallery of Canada), the study of a child and a kitten. Florence Carlyle (1864-1923), a native of Galt, Ontario, was also largely a figure painter. In *Grey and Gold*, 1913 (National Gallery of Canada), the study of a woman seated at a table, she emphasized decorative and pictorial elements.

An artist painting in Quebec during this period was Charles-Edouard Huot (1855-1930), who studied in Paris between 1874 and 1878 and travelled in France and Germany until 1886. After his return to Canada he earned a solid reputation as a painter of subjects drawn from Canadian history. Several murals in the provincial Legislative Building at Quebec were done by Huot and he has also left many canvases on historical themes. An example of the latter is *Battle of the Plains of Abraham*, c.1900 (Mlle. Huot collection, Sillery, Quebec).

William Brymner (1855-1925) painted landscapes in many parts of Canada. *Early Moonrise in September*, 1899 (National Gallery of Canada) is typical of his best work with its poetic feeling and atmosphere of reverie. Perhaps Brymner's greatest

distinction was as a sound and stimulating art teacher. He strove to maintain an intelligent awareness of all that was new and experimental in modern art. During the many years that he was director of art classes at the Art Association of Montreal he encouraged the younger artists.

Franklin Brownell (1856-1946) was born about the same year as William Brymner but he lived to be ninety years of age. After several years of study in Boston and Paris he came to Ottawa in 1886 and taught at the Ottawa Art School. Brownell was a versatile artist, painting portraits, genre subjects, and landscapes in eastern Canada and later in the West Indies. A languid, dreamlike air distinguishes his figure studies such as *The Golden Age*, 1916 (National Gallery of Canada); a new breadth appears in West Indies subjects like *The Beach, St. Kitt's*, 1913 (National Gallery of Canada).

In sculpture, Louis-Philippe Hébert (1850-1917) is known for his numerous bronze statues and memorials which decorate public buildings and squares in a number of cities. His statues on Parliament Hill, Ottawa, include *Sir John A. Macdonald* (1895) and the *Queen Victoria Monument* (1901).

The work of one of Canada's most able political cartoonists, Henri Julien (1851-1908), falls into this period at the turn of the century. He was born at Quebec and spent a large part of his working life as chief illustrator of the *Montreal Daily Star*. His fertile imagination produced a constant stream of drawings, portraits, caricatures, political satires, and illustrations. He is probably best known for his good-humoured satires on Canadian political life which appeared under the captions of "Bytown Coons" and "Scènes parlementaires". But the lively drawings which he used to illustrate the folk tales, "La Chasse-Galerie" (The Ghost Canoe) and "Le Loup-Garou" (The Were-Wolf) have also been much admired.



Louis-Philippe Hébert. *Queen Victoria Monument, Ottawa.*

Photo: National Film Board

Impressionism and Post-Impressionism

A group of painters in Paris who about 1860 concentrated on painting the light, colour, and striking patterns of nature—Whistler, Manet, Monet, Degas, Pissarro and others—were labelled “impressionists” as a term of derision. The name originated at the time of the first exhibition held at Paris in 1874 when a critic seized upon the title of one of Monet’s pictures called *Impression*.

Influenced by the art of the camera, the impressionists isolated a momentary scene from life and recorded an impression of it on canvas. People were often depicted half in or out of the canvas as they might be in a snapshot, and additional

inspiration was found in Japanese prints with their striking "accidental" patterns. In the realm of colour their innovations were most remarkable. They avoided solid areas of colour, juxtaposing dashes and spots of paint in vibrant little brush strokes. They also experimented with the effects of light on form, sometimes dissolving forms completely in coloured mists.

After a time-lag of some forty years, impressionism arrived in Canada about 1900, and painters like Marc-Aurèle de Foy Suzor-Côté and Maurice Cullen were the first to adapt it to the Canadian scene.

Suzor-Côté (1869-1937) adapted impressionism to the landscape of his native province. He was born in Arthabaska, Quebec and studied in Paris where he absorbed the new theories and techniques. His best work brings to life the winter



M.-A. de Foy Suzor-Côté. *Caughnawaga Women*. National Gallery of Canada

scenery along the St. Lawrence or the village types whom he understood so well. *Winter Landscape*, 1909 (National Gallery of Canada) is reminiscent of Pissarro at the full tide of impressionism. Suzor-Côté was also a sculptor who produced forty or fifty small bronze figures or groups, including the sturdy group of *Caughnawaga Women*, c.1920, now in the National Gallery of Canada.

Maurice Cullen (1866-1934), a native of Newfoundland, also spent considerable time in Paris before making his home in Montreal. Only after many years of bitter struggle to make ends meet did he finally achieve a fairly steady sale of his works. His favourite theme was the Montreal region in winter, with icy mists rising from the river, or old streets gay with sleighs drawn by steaming, blanketed horses. In his efforts to paint the winter scene exactly as he saw it, he observed that snow was not white but composed of a myriad of reflected colours—blues, violets, purples, pinks, and many others. The influence of the later Pissarro, when the French impressionist was using the technique of minute colour dots (“pointillism”), is reflected in Cullen’s *Old Houses, Montreal*, c.1908-9 (Montreal Museum of Fine Arts).

James Wilson Morrice

James Wilson Morrice (1865-1924) represents the impact on Canada of artistic movements following impressionism in Europe. Post-impressionism began with Cézanne, who abandoned impressionism in order to return to the age-old principles of solidity of form and breadth of composition. Gauguin added the element of strong colour and Van Gogh that of expressionism. From post-impressionism developed a variety of groups and movements, including fauvism which stressed patterns of pure colour, cubism which emphasized form, and expressionism which sought to express inner feelings and emotions by distortion of form, heightened colour, and other means.



Maurice Cullen. *St. John's Harbour, Newfoundland*. National Gallery of Canada

Morrice, who lived most of his life in Paris and was associated with Matisse, Marquet, and others of the Fauves, was nevertheless an outstanding figure in Canadian art. He has always been a little known, even an exotic figure because he spent much of his life away from Canada, living in bohemian Paris, or going off on voyages to Morocco or Tunisia or the West Indies. Yet he loved the snow, the ice on the river, and the little sleighs jangling along the narrow streets of Quebec, and he returned home on occasion to paint the winter landscape of the St. Lawrence region.

Born in 1865, the son of a well-to-do Montreal family of Scottish extraction, he was intended by his parents for the legal profession. But after graduation from the University of Toronto and Osgoode Hall he turned to painting and at the age of twenty-five went to Paris. There he was caught up in the art movements of the day and was stimulated by contact with artists and writers in the exhilarating atmosphere of Paris at the turn of the century. In his early years as an artist he painted soft Whistlerian scenes of life in Paris, the beaches of Brittany, squares and markets in Venice, and snow-covered streets in Montreal and Quebec.

After 1905 he began to emphasize colour and with it created charming patterns in his pictures. In this he was developing along the same lines as his friends in the Fauve movement (1905-8). Yet there is something unmistakably his own about his paintings: an elusive quality of timelessness and a certain atmosphere of gentle melancholy. Many of his canvases are also characterized by a pervading delicate rose colour, a diffused and pinkish light in the background. In this the French critics of his day professed to find an Anglo-Saxon romanticism, though to us his work seems so thoroughly French. His method was to place thinly painted dappled strokes separately on the canvas and then rub them together with a cloth, thus giving a smooth texture to the surface of his work.



James W. Morrice. *The Ferry, Quebec*. National Gallery of Canada

Two of his fairly rare Canadian paintings from this middle period are *A Canadian Square*, 1906 (A. Sidney Dawes collection, Montreal) and *The Ferry, Quebec*, c.1907 (National Gallery of Canada). The latter was a subject that had fascinated him from his early days when he would make countless sketches of the ferry wharf with the prospect of Quebec beyond on the cliff. The small horses and sleighs in both pictures occurred in so many of his Quebec scenes that they might almost be regarded as a signature to his canvases.

After 1910 Morrice was attracted by the strong colours of the West Indies and during the last ten years of his life he spent more and more time there. His most spontaneous and simple creations were done about 1919 following a winter spent in Trinidad. One of these is *Landscape, Trinidad*, 1921 (National Gallery of Canada). At the end of 1923 he went on one of his trips to North Africa. On January 23, 1924 he died in Tunis.

Although Morrice had a true feeling for the Canadian landscape, his approach was subtle, subjective, and universal, rather than strongly nationalistic. Nevertheless his influence was vital to the early development of A. Y. Jackson and through him to the national movement centred around the Group of Seven. Later still, in the nineteen-forties and fifties, the younger generation of Montreal painters have canonized him as a master. He is now recognized as the first great, and probably still the best, painter Canada has produced.

Among the artists whom Morrice met in Paris was Ernest Lawson (1873-1939), a native of Halifax. Lawson was also connected with the Fauve movement through Maurice Prendergast and other American artists. After studying in Mexico, New York, and Paris, Lawson settled permanently in New York though often painting in Nova Scotia. His canvases, such as *Misty Day*, c.1915 (National Gallery of Canada), are painted in broken and subtle colour and he has been referred to as "the artist with a palette of crushed jewels".

CHAPTER V

THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT IN PAINTING

THE rising tide of nationalism which permeated Canadian life in the early years of the new century found its artistic expression in the work of the Group of Seven. They interpreted the awakened national consciousness on canvas just as men like Octave Crémazie, Louis Fréchette, Sir Charles G. D. Roberts, Bliss Carman, and Archibald Lampman had begun earlier to do in poetry.

Working at the same time as the Group of Seven were other painters no less strongly attached to Canada who developed their own highly individualistic means of interpreting the spirit of the country.

Formation of New Art Institutions

Many new societies, institutions, galleries and museums were established during this period. Among them were several national organizations: Canadian Handicrafts Guild (1906), Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (1907), Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour (1925), Sculptors' Society of Canada (1932), and Canadian Society of Graphic Art (1933).

The Art Museum of Toronto, subsequently renamed the Art Gallery of Toronto, was founded in 1900. It grew steadily, expanded its building, began to acquire a fine permanent collection and later, largely through the work of Arthur Lismer, gained an international reputation in the field of art education.

The Royal Ontario Museum, which has become world famous for its great collection of Chinese art, was founded in 1914 in Toronto. The Art Gallery of Hamilton was founded in 1912.

The Art Association of Montreal, founded in 1860, opened its present building in 1912 and continued gradually to increase its permanent collection of paintings and decorative arts. Its famous art school was re-organized and classes for children were initiated.

The Museum of the Province of Quebec was founded in 1933 and set itself the task of building up a representative collection of works by Quebec painters and sculptors. Two art schools established in that province in the twenties were the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Quebec (1922), and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Montreal (1924).

In the Maritimes the New Brunswick Museum was opened in 1934. In 1936 the Maritime Art Association was formed, and under its auspices travelling art exhibitions were organized.

In western Canada the Winnipeg School of Art opened its doors in 1913. The Winnipeg Art Gallery, founded in 1933, was one of the first galleries in the west. Saskatchewan was provided with a permanent collection of European and Canadian art with the foundation of the Mackenzie Gallery at Regina College in 1934. In Alberta the Edmonton Museum of Arts was founded in 1924, and in the thirties the University of Alberta opened its summer school of fine arts at Banff.

On the Pacific coast, a loan exhibition from the National Gallery resulted in the formation of the British Columbia Art League. The Vancouver School of Art was founded about 1930 and the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1931.

The Toronto Group

Early in the century a group of commercial artists on the staff of the engraving firm of Grip Ltd., Toronto, began to take an interest in landscape painting as a recreation from their

work in the city. In parties of two or three they went on weekend sketching trips to the Georgian Bay district and spent their holidays in northern Ontario. They soon became strongly attached to this rocky pine-covered wilderness, with its silent lakes, burnt-over forests, and brilliantly coloured autumn foliage.

The eldest of the group were J. E. H. MacDonald (1873-1932), and Tom Thomson (1877-1917). Arthur Lismer (b.1885) and F. H. Varley (b.1881) arrived from England in 1912. Lawren Harris (b.1885) was introduced to these men by an enthusiast, Dr. J. M. MacCallum of Toronto, whose interest in their work was already strong. Later, in 1913, A. Y. Jackson (b.1882) was persuaded to come from Montreal to join the group.

It soon became apparent to these artists making exploratory painting trips into the north country that this vast panorama demanded a bold, vigorous treatment. The style hitherto used by artists in painting Canadian landscape seemed to these younger painters unsuitable for depicting the crude rawness and noble grandeur of Canada. And so they gradually evolved a way of their own, based on design and pattern and simplification of form, to portray what they saw and how they felt about the Canadian northland.

A mixture of regional feeling and the influence of French impressionism characterize the early phase of their work. For example, J. E. H. MacDonald's *Spring Breezes, High Park*, 1912 (National Gallery of Canada) is an unaffected, impressionistic, regional expression of southern Ontario. A transition from the gentleness of Morrice to conscious regionalism is represented by A. Y. Jackson's *Red Maple*, 1914 (National Gallery of Canada), which marks the north country's début in art. Thomson also caught the very spirit of the north in his small sketches which represent the instinctive reaction of a sensitive man to the forests and rivers which he knew and understood so well.

Tom Thomson

Born at Claremont, Ontario, Thomson spent his early years on a farm near Owen Sound. As a young man he had wandered to the West Coast and had worked as an apprentice in an engraving firm in Seattle. Later, when he returned to Canada, he went to Grip Ltd. In 1912 he took his first long canoe trip into a remote area of northern Ontario and from that experience dates his passionate devotion to the Canadian northland.



Tom Thomson. *The Jack Pine*. National Gallery of Canada

From the canoe trip of 1912 he brought back a few small oil sketches. These impressed his friends so much that they encouraged him to do larger compositions. Much of his inspiration in painting came from A. Y. Jackson. By 1914 he had left his job to spend the autumn and early winter painting in the north. He seems to have had a natural love for outdoor life and was able to paddle a canoe in a stiff breeze and follow a trail through the bush with the best of the guides and trappers.

But in 1917 his career was tragically and mysteriously cut short by death. He had gone north in the spring of that year to his cabin in Algonquin Park. One morning he spoke to one of his friends, a forest ranger, telling him that he had finished a series of sketches. Soon afterwards, on July 8, he was found drowned in Canoe Lake, not far from his overturned canoe. Writers have ever since been puzzling over the question whether it was accident, suicide, or murder.

During his brief career he only completed some thirty larger paintings. These include *Northern River* (1915) and *Spring Ice* (1916), both in the National Gallery of Canada, with their large tapestry-like patterns. His small sketches have a less static quality and represent his best work. Painted in jewel-like colours, they are among the most direct transcriptions from nature, using its simplest, strongest colours and patterns. Many of Thomson's sketches may be seen in the National Gallery.

During the war years, 1914-1918, these artist friends were temporarily scattered when some of them were commissioned as official war artists. Varley was one of those who were sent to France to gather material, and from this experience he produced some of the most dramatic canvases of all the war records. *Some Day the People Will Return*, 1918 (National Gallery of Canada) is a powerful painting in Varley's highly personal style, symbolizing the chaos and futility of war.

Lismer made some interesting records of the returning troopships at Halifax, one of the best examples of which is *The "Olympic" with Returned Soldiers*, 1918 (National Gallery of Canada).

Lawren Harris, in his early phase, focussed his attention on the raw ugliness of tar-papered shacks in a cheap suburb or squalid colliers' huts in a dismal mining town. He felt that these were less romantic aspects of the Canadian scene which nevertheless needed to be treated by the artist. In some of these early canvases, like *Return from Church*, 1919 (National Gallery of Canada) he has produced work that has a strong dramatic impact and also constitutes a social document of the period.

After 1920: The Group of Seven

In 1920, three years after Thomson's death, the group of artists who had been painting together almost as comrades held their first joint exhibition in Toronto. There were seven of them—J. E. H. MacDonald, Arthur Lismer, Lawren Harris, A. Y. Jackson, F. H. Varley, Franklin Carmichael (1890-1945), and Franz Johnston (1888-1948)—and they were soon known as the Group of Seven. The peak of their achievement was probably reached between 1924 and 1927, and this period was marked by a deliberate and somewhat brash nationalism.

J. E. H. MacDonald was born in Durham, England, and came to Canada with his Canadian parents when he was a boy of fourteen. For many years he was employed as a designer by Grip Ltd., but in 1921 he took a teaching post at the Ontario College of Art, of which he subsequently became principal.

MacDonald was a self-contained, retiring man whose convictions and outlook were based on his own quiet ponderings in the silence of forest and mountain and his reading of Thoreau and other nature writers. *Mist Fantasy*, 1922 (Art Gallery of Toronto) illustrates his use of pattern and design, as well as his lyrical, even mystical attitude to landscape, which



J. E. H. MacDonald. *Mist Fantasy*. Art Gallery of Toronto
(Gift of Mrs. S. J. Williams in memory of F. Elinor Williams, 1927)

is reminiscent of the Norwegian painter, Edvard Munch. One of the first to discover the splendid grandeur of Algonia scenery, MacDonald painted many sketches and large canvases of the tangled growth of the forest which glow with rich colour, often strongly and heavily applied.

During the last years of his life, MacDonald spent some of his holidays in the Rockies. In the solitude of the mountains he seemed able to satisfy a deep urge for meditation and communion with nature.

Arthur Lismer also painted the wild Algonia landscape. In *October on the North Shore*, 1927 (National Gallery of Canada), the majesty of the north country is brought out by

means of brilliant colours and giant rhythms. Before coming to Canada in 1911, Lismer had already had a good deal of training as an artist. He had attended art school in his birthplace, Sheffield, before going to the academy in Antwerp.

Since 1916 he has devoted a good deal of time to teaching and has made very significant contributions to the improvement of art education in Canada. Under the auspices of the Art Gallery of Toronto, he built up the Children's Art Centre, which became well known throughout the continent. In 1936



Arthur Lismer. *October on the North Shore*. National Gallery of Canada



Lawren Harris. *Bylot Island*. National Gallery of Canada

he accepted an invitation of the government of the Union of South Africa to spend a year organizing children's art classes there. Since 1940 he has been educational supervisor for the Art Association of Montreal and has started a Children's Art Centre there.

During the twenties Lawren Harris was also drawn to the stark, rugged landscape on the north shore of Lake Superior and his style tended towards the greatest simplification. He also painted in the Rockies and an example of his work of this period is *Maligne Lake*, 1924 (National Gallery of Canada) which illustrates the simplicity and strength, as well as the flatness of his patterns and his tingling, cold colours.

Later on he went even farther north on his sketching trips. In 1930 he made a summer voyage to Greenland and Baffin Island and the pictures which he brought back from this expedition suggest the immensity of space in those far northern regions and the menace lurking beneath the partly visible icebergs floating in a cold, green sea. The logical conclusion of Harris' stylization are the abstractions which he began to paint in the 1940's.

A. Y. Jackson made his first trip to Georgian Bay in 1913 and in 1914 he went north again to Algonquin Park with Tom Thomson. Through close association the two men helped each



A. Y. Jackson. *The Red Barn, Petite Rivière*. Collection: William R. Watson, Montreal

other a good deal. Jackson admired Thomson's simplicity, quiet friendliness, and enthusiasm; Thomson learned much about the technique of painting from his friend who had had the advantage of a thorough training in Paris.

The harsh Canadian winters appealed to Jackson just as intensely as did the pine-covered hills in summer or the flaming red and gold of autumn. In early spring he would visit the old settled parishes of the lower St. Lawrence region and would tramp through the countryside on snowshoes with sketch box in hand. In *Red Barn*, 1929 (Watson Art Galleries, Montreal) he has caught "the essence of the Canadian scene".

Later, Jackson was also attracted to the wilderness fringe of Canada—the mines of the Northwest Territories, the air-fields of the Yukon, and the fur-trading posts of Baffin Island. His canvas, *The North Shore of Baffin Island*, 1929 (East York Collegiate Institute, Toronto), is a product of one of these northern explorations.

Of all the members of the Group, Frederick H. Varley was the only one really interested in painting people, and much of his best work is in the field of portraiture. He was born in Sheffield, England, and, like Arthur Lismer, he later studied at the Antwerp Academy. Lismer recalls his first impression of Varley: "A man with a ruddy mop of hair—and it *was* red—which burned like a smouldering torch on top of a head that seemed to have been hacked out with a blunt hatchet. That colour was the symbol of a fire in his soul."

Although he never felt quite the same passion for the Canadian northland as his friends, Varley went with them on occasional camping trips to Georgian Bay. A large canvas which he produced at this time called *Georgian Bay* (1920), is in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada.

Some of Varley's most important work was done after 1926, the year in which he moved to the West Coast. He taught for a few years at the Vancouver School of Art and the British



F. H. Varley. *Vera*. Collection: The Right Hon. Vincent Massey, C.H.

Columbia College of Art. His imagination was deeply moved by the "mystical" quality of the landscape and its contrast with the people who lived beneath its overshadowing peaks. During the ten years he spent in British Columbia, Varley produced a large number of drawings, water colours, small oil studies on wooden panels, and larger canvases of both people and landscape. The lyric, visionary side of the movement came out in Varley as it did in J. E. H. MacDonald. An example of Varley's lyricism, as well as his highly individualistic use of colour, may be seen in the portrait *Vera*, 1930 (Massey collection).

Contemporaries of the Foregoing

At one period in his life Clarence Gagnon (1881-1942) came directly under the influence of Morrice and in paintings such as *Laurentian Village*, 1924 (Museum of the Province of Quebec), with its bright decorative patterns, the debt which he owed to the older painter is apparent. Gagnon was a native of Montreal, but he spent several long periods of his life in Paris. When he returned in 1909 to live for some years in Canada, he found his most stimulating subject matter in the Baie St. Paul area of Charlevoix County, on the north shore of the St. Lawrence. In painting cheerful winter scenes of village life in this district he produced his best canvases. On his return to France after the First World War he illustrated a number of books on Canadian themes. Among them was Louis Hémon's *Maria Chapdelaine*, for which he executed a series of very fine monotypes. After 1936 Gagnon lived in Canada again and died in Montreal in 1942.

Albert Robinson (1881-1956) grew up in Hamilton and studied for two years in Paris, but shortly after 1906 he went to live in Montreal and was soon on friendly terms with William Brymner, Edmund Dyonnet, and Maurice Cullen. Robinson met A. Y. Jackson a few years later, and at various times



Clarence A. Gagnon. *Laurentian Village*. Museum of the Province of Quebec

they sketched together at Cacouna, La Malbaie, Baie St. Paul, Les Eboulements, and other places on the lower St. Lawrence which were also familiar to Gagnon. From his first trip to Cacouna came his most famous painting, *Returning from Easter Mass*, 1922 (Art Gallery of Toronto) which is highly decorative in style and shows the influence of Morrice.

When the artists who later became known as the Group of Seven organized their first exhibition in Toronto in 1920, Robinson was asked to exhibit with them that year, and though he never joined them his work always remained congenial to them. He painted throughout Quebec on the themes of winter snow and ice-bound rivers, characteristic houses and farm

buildings, sleighs and ships. His art is a colourful expression of the daily life of the Quebec villager, full of charm and devoid of sentimentality.

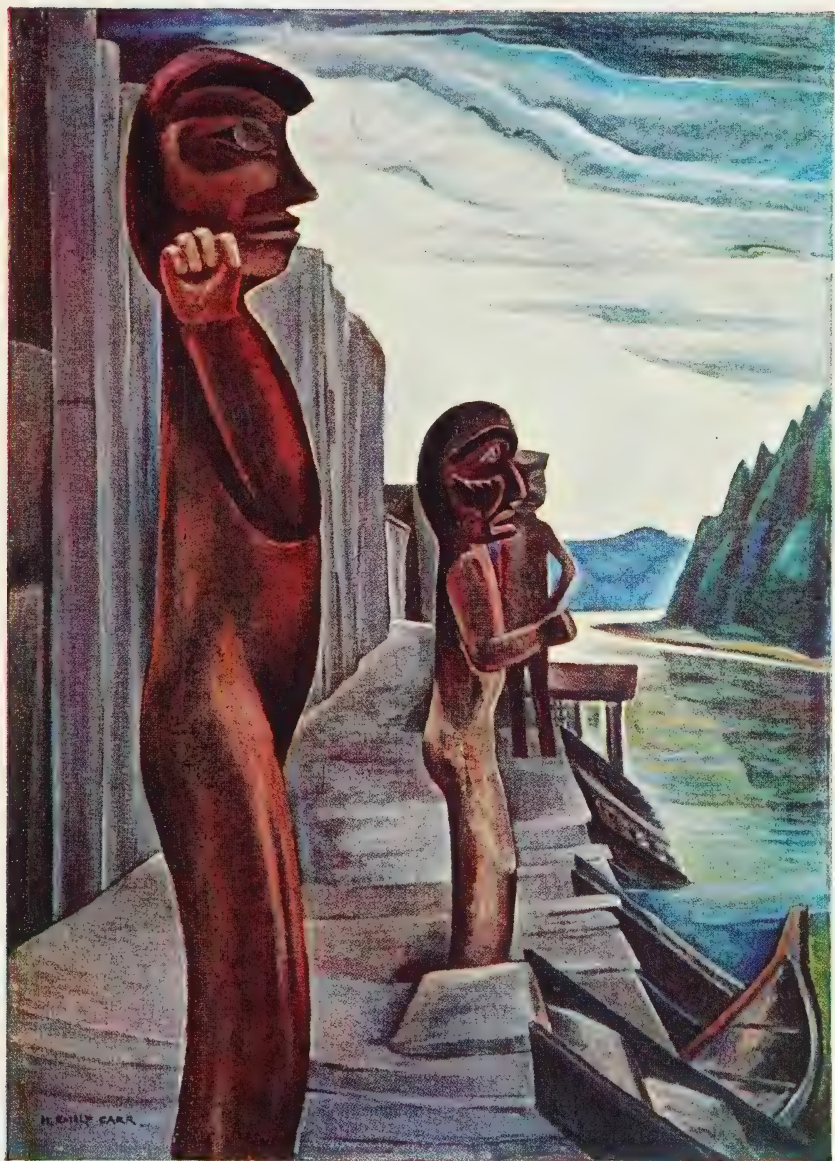
Emily Carr

Emily Carr (1871-1945), in her autobiography, *Growing Pains*, and in some of her other writings, has helped us gain an insight into a remarkable person. She was born in Victoria and from her earliest youth knew that she wanted to paint. When she was eighteen she persuaded her guardian to allow her to attend art school in San Francisco. On her return to Victoria she supported herself by teaching and over the years was able to save enough money to continue her art studies in England.

Even before going to England in 1899, Emily Carr had made several visits to the West Coast Indians. After she came back to Victoria in 1904 she made further trips to the Indian villages, sketching and becoming more and more interested in the life of the people. Through these contacts she conceived a deep respect for their art and a sincere love of the Indians themselves.

As time went on, she became dissatisfied with the technique she was using. She felt that if she learned the methods which the impressionists had discovered, she would be better able to express her feelings about Indian life and the great forests around her. So, in July, 1910, she set out for Paris and remained there for over a year, studying under several artists, probably including the New Zealand-born Frances Hodgkins who was influenced by the Fauves.

But when she began painting in the new way, with strong colours and bold patterns, on her return to Victoria in 1911, her work met with rebuffs, scorn and even ridicule from the critics, as well as from her family and the general public. This unsympathetic attitude forced her to give up teaching and she



Emily Carr. *Blunden Harbour*. National Gallery of Canada

was obliged to turn to other means of earning her livelihood, including making pottery and keeping a boarding house.

Thus for about fifteen years she did not paint at all. She lacked time and the desire. Yet eventually recognition began to come her way and the friendly encouragement of members of the Group of Seven helped revive her spirit and gave her renewed confidence in her work and ideas. In *Blunden Harbour*, 1928 (National Gallery of Canada), a large and austere work, the influence of Lawren Harris may be seen.

In the last period of her life, during which she went on lonely sketching trips into the forest, she worked with extreme concentration. Her swirling canvases of greens and greys and vivid blues expressed the brooding, jungle-like quality of the deep British Columbia forests with their dark mystery and grandeur. *Forest Landscape*, c.1935 (National Gallery of Canada), reveals the impulsive creation and tension of the later Emily Carr. Her death came suddenly, early in 1945, just after she had completed a number of oil-on-paper sketches for an exhibition.

David Milne

David Milne (1882-1953), an independent contemporary of the Group of Seven, was, with Morrice, one of the best painters Canada has yet produced. He was born on a farm in Bruce County, Ontario, in 1882. He spent a few years as a country school teacher and, with the money he was able to save, went to New York in 1904 where he joined the Art Students League. In 1913 his work was considered interesting enough to be shown at the famous Armory Show in New York, in which modern American and European pictures were first introduced to the public of this continent.

As Milne was not greatly attached to city life, he decided in 1916 to move to the small village of Boston Corner in a secluded part of New York state. One of his early pictures, painted in 1917, is called *Boston Corner* (National Gallery of

Canada). It shows influences of fauvism probably derived from Maurice Prendergast (a friend of Morrice) in New York, but already he was developing a highly sensitive personal style.

In 1928 he returned permanently to Canada. Lake Temagami attracted him for a short time. Later he built a one-room tar-paper shack on a remote lake in Muskoka and at various other times he lived in Toronto and one or two small towns in rural Ontario. *Water Lilies, Temagami*, 1928 (Hart House, University of Toronto) shows the gentle manner of Milne in contrast to the austere painting of the Group of Seven. His work is sensitive, fastidious, and personal. Characteristic of his style in this and other paintings are neat, dry colours, patches of white without colour, and broken line drawing.

In the 1920's Milne had begun his experiments with colour dry-points. These are obtained by printing from metal plates on which lines have been scratched with a needle. His first prints were in two or three colours, scratched on copper and printed by means of an ordinary washing-machine wringer. He used this makeshift press until one of his friends, impressed with the results Milne had achieved, gave him a complete printing outfit. One of his later dry-points, *Still Water and Fish*, 1941, shows Milne's extremely sensitive touch and sparing use of line and colour. Proofs of this and other dry-points may be seen at the National Gallery of Canada among other collections. Each plate was printed twenty-five or possibly fifty times, rarely more. These colour dry-points of Milne are among the finest works in Canadian graphic arts.

For about twelve years, between 1925 and 1937, Milne did only oils and dry-points. In 1937 he decided to try his hand again at water colour, a medium which he had used extensively in New York and the Adirondacks. But the water colours which he began to paint now were freer, more flowing and even more simplified than the early ones. In his Adirondack period he had built up his paintings in mosaics of short,



David B. Milne. *Still Water and Fish* (colour dry-point). National Gallery of Canada

precise strokes; in his later days he achieved limpid pictures with a few strokes of the brush on wet paper. *Rites of Autumn*, 1943 (National Gallery of Canada) has an unselfconscious sympathy for subject matter and a simplicity which is yet full of meaning, like an oriental picture.

Milne died in 1953. He was a shy and gentle man with an extraordinary capacity for imaginative creation. The pursuit of wordly possessions meant nothing to him. Throughout his life his mind was directed to the one purpose of seeing and painting everything beautiful in a chosen subject.

CHAPTER VI

CONTEMPORARY ART SINCE 1930

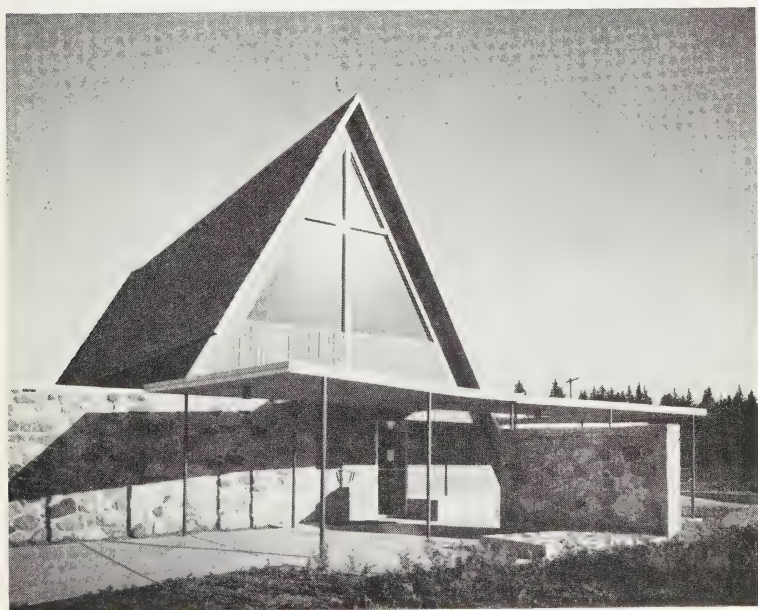
THIS is a period of conflicting movements. The "national" style which evolved in the previous period continued for a time as a strong force but was soon modified by outside influences and by the personality of the artists. Many of them have moved away from an exclusive concentration on landscape and are showing a lively interest in painting people. Various forms of abstract painting based on the School of Paris and other European movements were introduced in the 1940's and found many followers in Canada. Mexico began to attract artists and students and appeared as a new influence in Canadian art.

During the period there have been a variety of personal contributions of a high order but it is difficult to judge this work as it is art in the making.

Architecture

Although the "battle of the styles" still continues belatedly in many parts of Canada, architecture of contemporary inspiration is now under way. A growing number of schools, factories, hospitals, office and apartment buildings in many parts of the country are being erected in the contemporary mode. At its best, this new architecture is characterized by clarity and order in design, absence of ornamentation, functionalism, simplicity of inner spaces, dignity of proportion, and unity of the whole.

Architectural experimentation has developed to the greatest extent on the Pacific Coast, particularly in the Vancouver area. And here the architects have been most successful in designs for individual houses. Full advantage is taken of climate and topographical features. Few cities have such an abundance of picturesque sites as Vancouver and the houses are built to fit into their environment in a logical and yet informal way. Lightness of construction with a minimum of masonry is another attractive feature and one that is only made possible by the mild climate. The climate also allows for a large, relatively unbroken window space or for glass doors



Semmens and Simpson, Architects. *St. Anselm's Church, Vancouver.*
Photo: Graham Warrington, Vancouver

opening on to lounging terraces. Murals are becoming an integral part of the building and often extend past a glass partition to the outdoor terrace. Among the Vancouver architects who are responsible for the design of many of these new houses is the firm of Semmens and Simpson. A fine small prism-shaped church, St. Anselm's Church in Vancouver, was designed by this firm in the contemporary style.

An interesting development in the larger buildings of Vancouver is the exterior use of colour. An apartment hotel, for example, uses soft blue-green with rose trim, colours which are subtly suggestive of the natural colouration of the region. The interior colour design for another large building is the work of the artist, B. C. Binning. When seen from outside at night it resembles a giant abstract painting.

In Ontario, as in other provinces, architects have done excellent work in designing commercial and industrial structures, schools, hospitals, and other public buildings. The rapid advance made in school design in Canada is well illustrated by the Oshawa High School, designed by the John B. Parkin Associates of Toronto. This building was awarded the gold medal in the Massey Medals for Architecture competition in 1950. The same firm won silver Massey Medals in 1955 for the best designs in the industrial and commercial categories. The winning building in the commercial class was the Convenience Centre (shopping centre), Don Mills, Ontario, which has been developed as a rectangular unit in a restrained and pleasing style.

Religious architecture is also going through a period of change and this is nowhere more evident than in Quebec. Chief characteristics of the new style are simplicity and almost complete absence of ornamentation. Throughout the province are a number of smaller parish churches that reflect the new trends. One such is the Eglise du Christ-Roi at Joliette and another is the parish church at Ste. Adèle-en-Haut, which has



John B. Parkin Associates, Architects. *Salvation Army Headquarters Building, Toronto.*
Photo: Panda, Toronto

an attractive façade with a parabolic arch and an allegorical bas-relief over the doors. Among the most notable of the large religious buildings is the Seminary of the Order of the Clercs de Saint-Viateur, designed by Père Corbeil, a member of the Order, who has studied modern religious art and architecture in both the United States and Europe.

Further Development of the “National” Style

One important group of painters today includes those who are allied to the national movement by a fundamental nationalist feeling and attraction to “national” subjects, but who have modified the style in a number of different ways.

In Charles Comfort (b.1900), for example, the national style developed towards extreme simplification. Comfort is a Toronto artist who has sketched and painted as far afield as Nova Scotia, the Saguenay River in Quebec, and the north shore of Lake Superior. *Tadoussac*, 1935 (Massey collection) reflects his debt to the Group of Seven but also shows his own interpretation of the style which they evolved.

Comfort has also painted large portraits in water colour which are remarkable for their strength and vigour. One of the best known, *Young Canadian*, 1933 (Hart House, University of Toronto), is a portrait of his artist friend, Carl Schaefer (b.1903). Mural painting is another of Comfort's interests, and several large panels in Toronto and Vancouver buildings were done by him.

The influence of the Group of Seven may be traced in Carl Schaefer's water colours of rural Ontario scenery done in the 1930's. *Before Rain, Parry Sound*, 1935 (Art Gallery of Toronto) reveals the moody, sombre, personal quality which is inherent in many of these scenes. They are usually painted in dry, reticent style with emphasis on greens and harvest yellows. Although he rarely uses figures, he is able to convey something of the inner psychology of the region with its solid and un-



Carl Schaefer. *Before Rain, Parry Sound*. Art Gallery of Toronto
(Gift from Friends of Canadian Art Fund, 1937)

assuming way of life. In his recent work, Schaefer tends to select one small aspect of nature—a stump or a few tangled roots—and let it express what he has to say.

The Russian-born Paraskeva Clark (b. 1898) also paints the Ontario scene, very often that part of it which is close to her home. Indeed her ability to grasp the wonders of her own backyard and the neighbouring streets is one of the most characteristic elements of her painting. Her deft treatment and delicate colour sense may be seen in *Pink Cloud*, 1937 (National Gallery of Canada). In her use of colour to define form and to render visible the solid shapes beneath the surface of things she is indebted to Cézanne and to a lesser extent to Picasso.

Louis Muhlstock (b. 1904) first came into prominence with his charcoal and chalk drawings from life. They revealed his



Jack Humphrey. *Joanne*. National Gallery of Canada

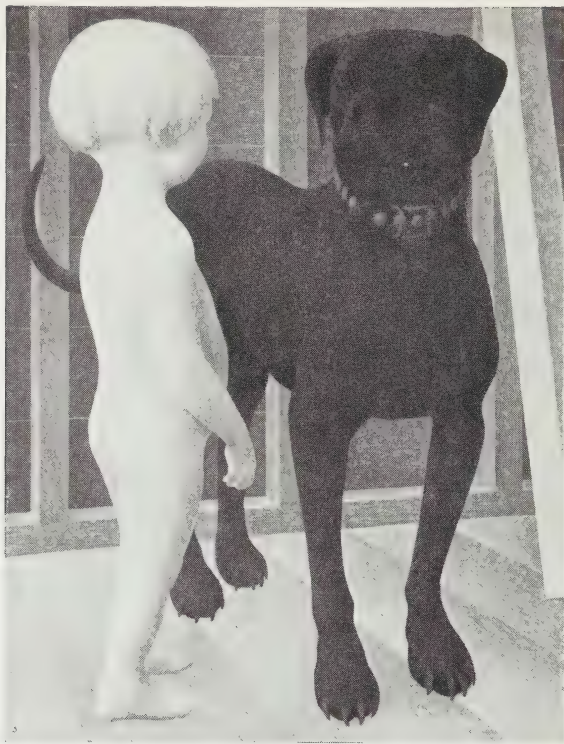
concern with living form and his deep compassion for humanity. In his painting, however, he seems to be more attracted to landscape than to figure studies. In many canvases he has skilfully and sympathetically caught the atmosphere of a quiet Montreal street with its contrast between green foliage and old brick houses, for example, *Ste. Famille Street, Wet Day*, 1939 (Mrs. I. H. Weldon collection, Toronto).

Jack Humphrey (b. 1901) has lived and painted in Saint John for the greater part of his life. The old New Brunswick city, whose great days go back to the era of the sailing ship, provides the subject matter of many of his water colours which evoke an atmosphere of quiet melancholy and nostalgia. This mood of sadness may also be sensed in some of his larger oils, for example, *Joanne*, 1947 (National Gallery of Canada). This is a portrait of a young girl whose bearing suggests quietness and restraint.

A younger painter from New Brunswick is Alexander Colville (b. 1920) who has been teaching art at Mount Allison University in Sackville since 1946. Some of his best figure paintings, such as *Child and Dog*, 1952 (National Gallery of Canada), are characterized by a certain cool serenity and a fine sense of balance.

Jack Nichols (b. 1921) centres his interest almost completely on people, and he strives above all to depict the inner qualities which determine how they look and act. His essentially tragic attitude to life and his ability to get below the surface of a face are revealed in his early *Sick Boy with Glass*, 1942 (Art Gallery of Toronto). This study, done with oil colour in turpentine wash, shows traces of the early Picasso. All Nichols' work is characterized by a marked emphasis on form, a selectivity of detail, and a slight colour range.

Lillian Freiman (b. 1908) is also intensely interested in people. But her approach is different from that of Jack Nichols. She is a genre painter who owes a good deal to the French artists, Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec. During the years



Alexander Colville. *Child and Dog*. National Gallery of Canada

she spent in Paris she loved to sketch individuals and groups among the crowds at the markets. In New York, where she now lives, she takes the same delight in sketching people of the neighbourhood with their pets and children. Through the nervous strokes of her brush, she is able to bring out qualities of both mood and character in the faces she portrays, for example, *The Bird Market* (National Gallery of Canada) and *Two Sisters*.

The exuberant personality of Pegi Nicol MacLeod (1904-1949) dominated everything she did, and her bubbling enthusiasm expressed itself in her canvases covered with a cascading profusion of figures. One of her later water colours is *New York City Navy Canteen*, 1944 (Art Gallery of Toronto). This picture fairly overflows with people and has about it much of the sparkle and the animated line and colour of the French artist, Dufy. Water colour was the medium best suited to her talents, and in this she worked with great speed and concentration. She believed that once a line was put down it possessed an expressive reality in itself and should never be changed.

Jean-Charles Faucher (b. 1907) and Jean-Paul Lemieux (b. 1904) were inspired by the tradition of folk painters or conscious "primitives". That is, they try to view the world through the eyes of a child or a primitive artist, while at the same time inevitably retaining their sophisticated approach. Faucher, with a sense for the satirical, has used simple patterns to depict the life about him in rural and urban Quebec. In *Cour d'école*, 1941 (Museum of the Province of Quebec), an amusing scene in a school yard, the artist has used countless little figures in motion to form his patterns. He has, however, a very few paintings to his name.

The stylization and decorative qualities of folk art also seem to be the most congenial means for Lemieux to express what he feels about the Quebec scene. Lemieux's early *Lazarus* (Art Gallery of Toronto) is a naive conception of the miracle of Lazarus taking place on the shores of the St. Lawrence. More recently, he has turned to a freer, sur-realistic style.

Many of the paintings by Kenneth Lochhead (b. 1926) are peopled by oddly dignified automaton-like figures standing stiffly in groups. *The Dignitary*, 1953 (National Gallery of Canada) is characteristic of his recent work. For the past several years Lochhead has taught art at Regina College.

A modern painter on the West Coast is Edward J. Hughes whose British Columbia landscapes have something of the startling freshness and faint menace of the French primitivist, Henri Rousseau. The theme of tugboats, fishing smacks or holiday schooners often recurs in his work. One such painting is *Tugboats, Ladysmith Harbour*, 1950 (National Gallery of Canada). The small boats with clear bright accents of colour, the neat little figures of fishermen on deck, the waves on the choppy sea, and the lowering clouds overhead are all painted with careful attention to detail. Yet over all there hangs a faint air of disquiet as if nature might become suddenly violent and overwhelm the frail craft.

Another Vancouver artist is Donald Jarvis (b. 1923) whose style is completely different from that of Hughes. He has departed from the literal transcription of appearance and has selected and transposed his impressions so that the resulting forms may express what he wants to say. His search for form at the very heart of nature suggests his debt to the English painter, Graham Sutherland. Tense and tragic figures, cubistic in treatment, appear in his paintings and drawings which have a strangely haunting quality. *The Crowd* (Vancouver Art Gallery) is typical of his recent paintings of city life. The figures, always in movement, walk like great giant spectres against a background of a desolate, post-atomic world.

Abstract Painters

In abstract painting, the artist uses forms that he has "abstracted" or drawn from nature and greatly simplified. Non-objective painting is another aspect of modern art, and here the forms may not necessarily be drawn from nature but may spring from the artist's imagination.

The art of Marian Scott (b. 1906) and Jack Shadbolt (b. 1909) is a sort of abstraction based on organic forms and reflects influences from Graham Sutherland and American



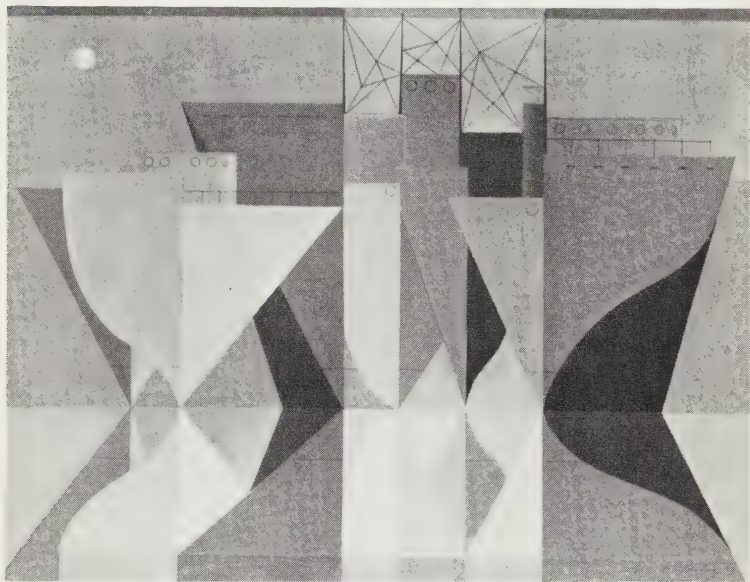
Edward J. Hughes. *Car Ferry at Sidney, British Columbia.*
National Gallery of Canada

painters like Morris Graves of Seattle. Marian Scott of Montreal has explored the hidden world revealed in the structure of fossils, cells, and crystals. Intricate abstractions formed from cells are the basis of her mural on endocrinology at McGill University. *Fossils*, 1946 (National Gallery of Canada) illustrates her effective use of stylized forms and relatively muted colour.

Jack Shadbolt, the Vancouver artist, has found symbols to express his feelings about life in minute aspects of nature such as roots, seeds, and grass stems. These suggest to him the

life cycle—the struggle under the earth to break through, the flowering, withering, and return to earth again. Many of his recent paintings possess an explosive power and vital energy which may derive from his early contacts with Emily Carr and West Coast Indian art. His tendency to paint in dark colours—browns, blacks, greys, and earth tones—may be seen in *Presences after Fire*, c. 1952 (National Gallery of Canada).

Like many other younger Canadian painters, Shadbolt is keenly interested in mural work. He has painted large decorative compositions based on British Columbia themes for hotels in Vancouver and Victoria, as well as a completely abstract mural in a colour scheme of golden tan, white, brick red, slate grey, and deep olive for a new Vancouver office building.



B. C. Binning. *Ships in Classical Calm*. National Gallery of Canada

The more precise, architectural side of abstract painting is represented by B. C. Binning (b.1909), also a West Coast artist. From his early youth, ships and activities along the waterfront held a strong attraction for him. This interest is reflected in all his work, from his early pen-and-ink drawings to his later cool, crisp, decorative abstractions in oil. An example of the latter is *Ships in Classical Calm*, 1948 (National Gallery of Canada). The light, airy, almost joyous feeling that he managed to get into his paintings is suggested by the title of one of them, *Small Boats Frolicking near a Blue Diving Tower*, 1949 (Hart House, University of Toronto).

In recent years, however, Binning has left behind these playful ship forms and his work is now completely abstract. It retains its peculiar gay quality, however, and the clarity of line and cleanness of colour are still there, but in purer form. These qualities are also present in recent murals which he has painted in Vancouver.

Interest in abstract art in Toronto resulted in the formation of the "Painters Eleven" group late in 1953. Among the members of this group are Harold Town (b.1924) and William Ronald (b.1926). Town has won distinction both as a painter and a graphic artist. A wealth of original experiment lies behind his single autographic prints, an example of which is *Solemn Volley for a Sad King* (National Gallery of Canada). Ronald's work is often characterized by a dazzling pattern of strong colours. One of his recent paintings is *The River* (National Gallery of Canada).

The Montreal School

The upsurge of art in Montreal dates from the return of Alfred Pellan from Paris in 1940 and the arrival of a number of French artists, scholars, and writers who were temporary refugees in the province after the fall of France. These events resulted in the introduction into Canada of the great modern Paris movements: abstraction, and surrealism (the arrange-

ment of forms and colours of natural objects to achieve an emotional or aesthetic effect).

Notable in the group who came from France was Père Marie Alain Couturier, a Dominican designer and architect, and friend of the great French painters. During his stay in Montreal Père Couturier tried to bring about a greater awareness and appreciation of the principles of modern art as expressed through the School of Paris. In his lectures and writings he criticized the academic and regionalist schools of painting in Canada and urged that recognition be given to those artists whose work expressed their inmost thoughts and emotions.

Before the ideas of Couturier were generally accepted, a violent struggle broke out between the traditionalists and modernists in the art world of Montreal. The dynamic figure in the forefront of this conflict was Alfred Pellán (b. 1906). Shortly after his return to Montreal after fourteen years spent studying and painting in Paris, exhibitions of his work were held both in Quebec and Montreal.

In Montreal his more sensational paintings caused a furore: the younger artists looked to him as a champion of the new ideas but many of the older generation regarded his work with alarm and rejection. Within the Ecole des Beaux-Arts itself the conflict, which had been smouldering for some time, flared up into a riot when two paintings submitted by students of Pellán were not hung at the school's annual exhibition. Feeling ran high for some time. In the end, as the result of reorganization within the school, Pellán, Stanley Cosgrove, and Jacques de Tonnancour were admitted to the teaching staff.

During his years in Paris, Pellán absorbed the influences of Picasso and the Spanish-French surrealist, Joan Miró, among others. A composition that he painted in 1935, *Bouche rieuse* (National Gallery of Canada), shows the influence of Miró in its decorative, amusing, nervous French type of



Alfred Pellán. *Nature morte (Still Life)*. Museum of the Province of Quebec



Goodridge Roberts. *Georgian Bay*. Collection: R. H. Hubbard, Ottawa

surrealism. On his return to Montreal he tended to concentrate mainly on large, semi-abstract compositions painted in bright, vibrant colours. Pellán has proved himself a force in Canadian painting. Because of his own experimental, exuberant work and the lively discussions which it has stimulated, his name is associated with the resurgence of art in Montreal.

Goodridge Roberts (b. 1904) shares with Pellán and the other painters of the Montreal school the belief that it is not the artist's duty to record the appearance of things, but rather to express his own reactions to what he sees in the world about him. His deep love of nature and sensitive eye enable him to bring out undertones in his Laurentian landscapes which are interpretative of the character of Canada. He never resorts to melodramatic effects but uses very simple colour schemes in which greens and blues predominate. The water colour *Landscape near Lake Orford*, 1945 (National Gallery of Canada) reveals the strong, poetic quality of his work.

In his portraits and nude studies, Roberts is concerned with the interplay of colour, texture, and form rather than with character and emotion. By reducing his figures to essentials, as in the *Nude*, 1943 (National Gallery of Canada) he gives them classic values.

Jacques de Tonnancour (b. 1917) was for a time a student of Goodridge Roberts and was influenced by the older artist in his early development as a painter. Matisse and Picasso were other strong formative influences, though de Tonnancour has never studied long in France. During a year spent in Brazil in the 1940's, the beauty of the landscape made a strong impression on him. He found himself confronted with the problem of finding his own personal method of abstracting the essential elements from nature.

His fine, sure draughtsmanship, from which all unessentials are eliminated, is illustrated in the many figure paintings which he did in the 1940's. These paintings, such as *La Robe bleue*, 1944 (Hart House, University of Toronto), also revealed



Jacques de Tonnancour. *La Robe bleue*.

Collection: Hart House, University of Toronto

de Tonnancour as a disciple of Matisse in his use of strong, flat colours. In recent years the Montreal artist has been concerned with the conscious deformation of shapes and outlines in still lifes and figures. By forceful arrangements in design, he hopes to be able to invest his compositions with a "feeling of timelessness".

Stanley Cosgrove (b.1911) chose Mexico rather than France for his post-graduate training centre. During the four years which he studied there he worked under the great Mexican artist, Orozco, who taught him a great deal about mural painting. As a result, Cosgrove returned to Canada with an intense interest in mural work. Recently he completed a fresco for the entrance to the new philosophy and science wing of the Collège de Saint Laurent, near Montreal.

In his easel painting, Cosgrove has tended to concentrate on certain subjects: the faces of women, trees in a woodland glade or still life compositions. His style is distinguished by



Paul-Emile Borduas. *Deux Arbres dans la nuit*. Collection: R. H. Hubbard, Ottawa

cool, delicate tones, often in shades of umber, grey, and ochre. *Still Life with Milk Jug*, 1943 (National Gallery of Canada), which is influenced by his Mexican experience, shows how Cosgrove has distorted forms in order to obtain the effect he wants.

Paul-Emile Borduas (b. 1905) was one of the first exponents in Canada of a style of painting called automatism. (Automatism is a kind of surrealism which seeks to exalt the subconscious into an active, creative force.) Borduas derived many of his ideas from a study of the French artist, André Breton. In 1948 he and a group of younger Montreal painters issued a manifesto entitled *Refus global* in which automatism was defined as the discarding of orthodox restrictions and the creation of something new and fresh in artistic expression by purely intuitive means.

Borduas himself began as a painter of religious subjects but he gradually developed the automatist style, letting the first instinctively directed strokes of his brush determine the initial pattern of his painting. At first he retained certain shapes and forms which bore a resemblance to those in nature. But most of his recent work has consisted of pure abstractions, such as *Les Signes s'envolent*, 1954 (Montreal Museum of Fine Arts), which is characterized by fluid forms and jewel-like colours.

Among the painters who were associated with Borduas in the publication of *Refus global* was Jean-Paul Riopelle (b. 1923). This artist began his career by producing drawings of an expressionist nature but he gradually abandoned drawing because it enclosed and distinguished forms too sharply. His purpose now is to strip himself bare of all that is not pure intuition. He applies layer upon layer of colour and completes his work at a single sitting, sometimes lasting ten hours. Most of his recent pictures have taken the form of a tangle of iridescent colours through which he sometimes achieves the sumptuous effect of stained glass. A good example is *Knight Watch*, 1954 (National Gallery of Canada).



Stanley Cosgrove. *Still Life with Milk Jug*. National Gallery of Canada

Two other painters who are working in the surrealist style are Léon Bellefleur (b.1910) and Albert Dumouchel (b.1916). For Bellefleur, as for so many other Montreal painters, the return of Pellán from Europe opened the door on a new world. He felt free to make his own discoveries. Paul Klee, the Swiss expressionist, was the first master to whom he became attached; later he moved on to Miró and the surrealists. The painting and drawing of children also fascinated Bellefleur at this period and through studying their work, he arrived at a more direct and spontaneous manner of expression. Then he discovered automatism and set about creating forms in response to inner emotional impulses. Many of his paintings, such as *Danse des noyés*, 1950 (National Gallery of Canada), are characterized by a profusion of forms which cover the picture from edge to edge.

Albert Dumouchel is an experimenter. As well as oil and water colour, he works with lacquers, enamels, and lithographic inks and dyes, and he may combine several of these materials in one picture. *Les Bubons du soleil sont allongés*, 1953 (National Gallery of Canada) is a canvas. Except for a technical knowledge of graphic arts, he is self-taught but by no means a primitive. On the contrary, his work is highly complicated. In the manner of the automatists, he is not aware of how each new painting will develop but allows it to take on its own life under his brush.

Abstraction in sculpture is represented by Louis Archambault (b.1915). The giant birds which are characteristic of his work seem to symbolize the force and drive of men. Archambault feels that the arts should be on a large scale in Canada in order to hold their own against the vastness of the country.

No matter how far removed his pieces may be from ordinary appearances, they always bear some relationship to a natural form. One of his strange mythological birds, *Oiseau*



Jean-Paul Riopelle. *Huile*, 1952 (*Oil*, 1952). Collection: Pierre de Ligny Boudreau, Paris



Louis Archambault. *L'Oiseau de fer.*

Photo: A. A. MacNair, Longueuil, Quebec

de fer, ten feet high and formed of welded iron plates, was displayed in Battersea Park, London, during the Festival of Britain in 1951. On the shore of a Laurentian lake, in 1955, he built a bird nine feet tall made of plaster over a steel skeleton. Its body was in the shape of an immense egg, and its head, on the end of a long tapering neck, was an open beak shaped like a double-pronged fork. It stood on three curved legs as if poised to move aggressively forward.

Archambault's method is to make innumerable experimental drawings on paper until an idea takes shape. In translating

his idea into plastic form he prefers to use materials that have a rough, rather than a smooth polished finish. Roughness to him expresses power and the materials that he finds most satisfactory are clay and iron.

In his opinion, an artist should not stand aloof from the world in which he lives. He should adapt himself to society and increase his usefulness by designing and making small objects within the reach of everybody. Archambault himself has attempted to meet the needs of the community by his ceramics—flat, functional plates and platters, figures, and masks.

During a recent year spent in Europe, Archambault was able to gain a new perspective on Canada and his own relationship to it. Although he felt strongly attracted to France and other parts of Europe, in the end he did not wish to stay. He came to the realization that he belonged to Canada, that he must try to express it and must give to it, even if it were reluctant to accept what he had to give.

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